

# THE MONTHLY REVIEW

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## THE IRISH UNIVERSITY QUESTION

**T**HERE is no doubt that Ireland is an interesting country to dwell in. It is never free from the heat of one or more burning controversies. For over sixty years the Irish University question has been kept alight, and no legislative measure has as yet been able to extinguish it. Never since Mr. Gladstone's ill-starred measure of 1873 has it burned with such intensity as now, and to Mr. Bryce is due the credit of having contributed more fuel to the flames than even Mr. Gladstone himself. Sir Robert Peel, with the greatest courage and intrepidity, established the Queen's Colleges and University to meet Roman Catholic disabilities, facing such opposition on this, and on Roman Catholic emancipation and the Maynooth Bill, as probably has not been faced by any other statesman in the House of Commons in modern times. The basis of these institutions was secular—a basis familiar in Ireland in its educational systems, and known as combined secular and separate religious instruction. No State allowance was made to the colleges for religious teaching, and there were defects inherent in the system which laid it open to criticism, and hindered the efficient working of the whole scheme. To Cardinal Cullen, however, is due the failure that attended the Colleges and University as institutions for the higher education of the Roman Catholic youths of Ireland. At the Synod of Thurles, in 1850, the Archbishop, acting as apostolic delegate,

carried a resolution of condemnation on the whole scheme, and from that date the Colleges were subjected to the active hostility of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and branded with the contemptuous epithet of "godless." An equally active hostility was shown to Trinity College, and of late years every charge that the ingenuity of man could make against Dublin University has been hurled against it with a persistency worthy of a better cause. If the ability shown in destructive criticism in Ireland could be turned to a constructive account, there probably would not be in the civilised world a more prosperous or a more progressive nationality.

Notwithstanding all opposition, Roman Catholic students attended both the Queen's Colleges and Trinity College, but there is no doubt that numbers were debarred from university education in the thirty years following the Synod of Thurles, until the establishment of the Royal and the abolition of the Queen's University. Though this cleared the way for the Roman Catholic students, the legislation was highly mischievous from an academic and university point of view. Residence was now made optional at the Queen's Colleges, and a pure examination system, on the lines of London University, replaced the old teaching system. After a short trial the Royal University was condemned, notably by Archbishop Walsh, on the grounds stated, and also on the grounds of the unfairness of the whole system of examinations and the constitution of the examining board.

Fawcett's Act (1873) threw open every post and emolument in Trinity College to all classes and creeds; and although Roman Catholic students entered its walls and achieved high distinction, even to the election to Fellowship, the severest test of scholarship in any university in the world, yet the numbers have not been as great as was anticipated, nor as all friends of free institutions would desire. It is but fair here to state that, Trinity College opened her doors to Roman Catholic students fifty years before Oxford and Cambridge, and established foundation scholarships to meet the disabilities of the members

of that faith put upon them by her constitution. In the life of the College they have always taken a prominent, in fact a leading place, considering their numbers, and no charge of ever interfering with the free exercise of their faith could be made against the authorities or students of the College. The whole atmosphere of the place is eminently free, tolerant, and independent; but she is Protestant from force of circumstance, and could not be otherwise from the predominance of the number of her students of that faith; her whole history and traditions are so, just as are those of Oxford and Cambridge. Being all this, she is under the ban of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and will remain so until that nebulous thing religion without dogma replaces dogmatic religion. Throughout the whole of the long period of agitation for the redress of educational grievances the Roman Catholic hierarchy have been absolutely consistent in their demands in the matter of faith and morals. "Godless" institutions they will not have. Protestant colleges are equally condemned, for mixed education is an anathema. An institution with a Roman Catholic atmosphere, that and that alone will satisfy their needs. Any measure framed, however it may be branded "free of tests," that they accept may assuredly be considered safe as regards faith and morals, and will be subject to that Roman Catholic atmosphere to which they are pledged for conscience sake, and which they never will relinquish for any other consideration, no matter how great. Such consistency to an ideal, although not our ideal, is worthy of all respect, if not of admiration.

Thus we see that an avenging Nemesis has pursued all Parliamentary efforts to meet the Roman Catholic demands in the matter of higher education. The federal scheme of Peel proved a failure; this was followed by the federal scheme of the Royal, chiefly the creation of Lord Cairns, which proved an equally disastrous one, condemned as it is by its own senate and by Lord Robertson's Commission. The standard of examination that it set was high, and within its limitations good work was done by it. Large numbers of Roman Catholic

students graduated under it, and its privileges were fully open to women, of which every advantage was taken by them. In every way it is to be regretted that the recommendations of Lord Robertson's Commission were not carried into effect by the late Conservative Government. It would have been easy without any disruption to existing institutions to have turned the Royal into a great teaching institution, and endowed a constituent Roman Catholic College in Dublin under it. This would have been moving along the lines of least resistance, it would have satisfied existing needs for a generation at least, and as the chief colleges grew in strength they would ripen out into the full manhood of independent universities. But the fatal policy of delay which characterised the last days of the Conservative Government dropped the Irish University question into the limbo of neglected and forgotten things; and now the Unionists, and especially those of Ireland, are face to face with the threatened destruction of a great and noble institution—namely, that of Trinity College. The danger was not unforeseen, and was often pointed to; the lowest form of political intelligence might have seen it. The political history of all countries furnishes plenty of examples of the destruction of noble institutions when needed reform was long delayed. Should evil befall Trinity College, the late Conservative Government must bear their full share of the blame, in not taking advantage of the opportunities offered to deal with the whole question.

The Liberal Government, urged by the Irish Nationalists, to whom it owes so much for their adherence in the contest over the English Education Bill, appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into all matters connected with Dublin University and Trinity College. The result was a very valuable report. The work of the Commission was conducted with great despatch and with great thoroughness, and the utmost credit is due to it for the manner in which the inquiry was conducted, and the rapidity with which the report was put into the hands of Parliament and the public. But where credit and considera-

tion were most to be expected—namely, from the Government—it was there they were least received. With reckless impetuosity and with indecent haste, and before the public had time to give any consideration to the report of the Commission or the evidence put before them, Mr. Bryce rushed into publicity with an elaborate speech outlining the intended Government measure, prepared beforehand, on the Irish University question. Two hastily brought together deputations were summoned to meet Mr. Bryce in Dublin, on which an educational expert could hardly be said to be present, and without a single representative of Trinity College, and before such as these Mr. Bryce launched his scheme on the eve of his departure from Ireland, having previously resigned the office of Chief Secretary. The whole incident was unworthy of a high official, and it was still more so in ignoring the body of evidence in the report, the recommendations of the Commissioners, and the opinion of the responsible representatives of the institutions concerned. Mr. Bryce's action bears its own condemnation, and we cannot recall a parallel for it in the career of any statesman in recent times, not even in Ireland, where men so often lose their heads, without even the excuse of having them broken, as sometimes happens in the way of friendship.

Mr. Bryce's proposal is a new scheme of federation—an astounding one, considering the failures of the Queen's and the Royal Universities, and the failure of the Victoria University in England. The new Dublin University is to have as constituent colleges Trinity, Belfast, Cork, a new college for Roman Catholics in Dublin, and subsequently Maynooth, Galway, Magee College, Londonderry, with others as occasion may arise. In fact, Mr. Gladstone's famous Bill is taken out of its pigeon-hole after thirty years' accumulation of dust has lain upon it, and presented to us again. The proposition does not bear a moment's consideration from any sane mind; but we feel compelled to criticise it, though it may insult the poorest intelligence. In the first place, what has Trinity College done that after over three hundred years' great and noble work

she is to be dragged down from her high place, harnessed to provincial colleges young in years and, although doing good and useful work, inferior to her in experience and equipment, in the magnitude of the work done and the fame earned, and in the intellectual ability of the governing body and the professorial staff? Not only this, but she is to be placed upon the same standing as the newly established College, which must differ from her in ideals as far as the poles asunder. Such an alliance is a revolt against all human experience, and is an outrage to common sense. The unanimous Report of the Commissioners pays the highest possible tribute to the standard of teaching in Trinity College, the character of the work accomplished, and the zeal and integrity with which she has fulfilled the high trust imposed upon her. To injure her in the face of such a testimony would be a crime worthy of the deepest condemnation. Such institutions are slow in growth and require careful nursing, and cannot be tampered with impunity. Their fame and reputation can easily be injured by experimental legislation; but one thing no legislation, however wise, can accomplish, and that is, transfer that fame and reputation to another sphere of action. Mr. Bryce, indeed, professes the utmost desire to preserve the usefulness and great name of Trinity College—a profession, no doubt, in which he is sincere; but in imagining that the alliance he proposes will not level down Trinity College, while yet levelling up the other constituent colleges, he is imagining what the wit of man cannot in the one case prevent nor in the other compass. Against such an alliance every witness before the Commission who was competent to express an opinion, and especially those representing the various bodies concerned, offered an unqualified testimony. How Mr. Bryce could, in the face of this, propose such a scheme baffles our comprehension.

The most gross piece of injustice in the proposed measure is that, the graduates of the Royal University are to become automatically graduates of the University of Dublin—not only lowering the standard of her degrees, but swamping her



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graduates with an army of several thousand voters exercising the franchise in the representation of this body on the new governing board. Mr. Bryce's sense of equity and justice must have become strangely warped during his short term of office at Dublin Castle. Many charges and accusations have been made against the seat of government at the foot of Cork Hill, but if it is capable of such witchcraft as this we fear there must be some foundation for them. If Trinity College had been an institution deserving of condemnation, deserving of being thrown into the melting-pot and recast anew, one could understand such a policy ; but, standing as she does free of any such thing, with a noble record of work behind her, and with the highest possible standard put upon her degrees for the scholarship they show, an institution whose honorary degrees are valued by the most learned men all over the world, on a par with those of Oxford and Cambridge, such a degradation of her degrees is a piece of political insanity equivalent to the debasing of the current coin of the realm, and unworthy of the Parliament of a great nation. We cannot think that such gross injustice will ever be put upon her.

In the composition of the governing body of the new University Mr. Bryce could follow no other lines than those upon which all such appointments in Ireland run when nominations are made by the Crown—namely, political and religious. The system, bad enough in any public board, is mischievous in the highest degree in the composition of the governing body of a University, where academic merit should be the only qualification for such a nomination. The detestable half-and-half system again, with the changes rung on Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist, turn about, as vacancies arise ! What a spectacle for the Universities of the Old World and the New to wonder, gaze, and laugh at ! And yet this is the scheme proposed by a distinguished university man, whose life has been spent in academic circles ; and he has the temerity to stand before the academic world as sponsor for such a misshapen changeling as

this. Trinity College has never known any such interference with the management of her affairs in her three hundred years of autonomous existence, and the world may well ask, What has she done to deserve such a fate?

The new governing body is to have the control of the examinations, to appoint the university professors and direct their teaching. Mr. Bryce was careful to expound these powers, especially in all points where controversy on theological subjects might enter. He was emphatic in declaring there were to be no tests in the new establishment. But on any governing body elected the Roman Catholic hierarchy must be represented; and if anything has been made plain in the evidence elucidated by the Commissioners it is that, in the question of faith and morals the voice of the ecclesiastic carries the lay opinion with it. No man will be appointed to any professorial position who is not safe in all matters of faith and morals, and what is this but a test? Let there be no mistake about it. On that subject the Roman Catholic hierarchy are absolutely united; and no system which does not give them power in these, to them, vital matters will be accepted, or, if accepted, be considered final. The Liberal party have always set themselves steadfastly against denominational endowment; this was Mr. Gladstone's position in 1873, and their whole attitude was aptly hit off by Matthew Arnold as "that spavined, vicious-eyed Liberal hobby, expressly bred to do duty against the Irish Catholics." We have an equal dislike to the hobby. We are not appealing to it—far from it; but Mr. Bryce was riding another in this whole scheme, doubly vicious-eyed and spavined in every limb. Denominational endowment the new College will be stamped with; the governing body of the University, from the nature of its appointment, will never command the respect and confidence of some of the Colleges at least; the appointment of the professors will be tainted with the vicious element of tests; and a check will be put upon free speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of publication. In proof of this we have, in a pamphlet published



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by Dr. Hogan, of Maynooth, a perfectly candid and honest production from the Roman Catholic point of view, giving a criticism on the leading professors and fellows of Trinity College as men unsafe in matters of faith to act as teachers of Roman Catholic youths. We need only mention that among those condemned are Dr. Mahaffy, Dr. Tyrrell, Professor Bury, and Dr. Dowden. To what a level of mediocrity must a University sink that would be deprived of the teaching of such men as these! Is it any wonder that Mr. Bryce's scheme was received by the senate of Trinity College with a merciless criticism, and repudiated by the whole body of fellows, professors, resident masters, and others—a unanimity in that body unknown on any great question, we think, within living memory except in 1873? It has been equally condemned by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and Mr. Birrell, on whose shoulders the tattered mantle of the scheme has fallen, may well pause before presenting it, however well patched it may be, before the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

In the domain of science, philosophy, and history a boundary line is to be drawn beyond which no professor teaching Roman Catholic youths can go; and who is to be the judge of where the line is to be drawn? The Roman Catholic hierarchy determine the bounds of Catholic doctrine, and therefore the boundaries of the scientific region, as distinctly stated by Bishop Dwyer before the Robertson Commission. Men are to be appointed—there is no hesitation in the evidence given—who will prove safe in these matters. We do not quarrel with this, nor do we question the right of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to dictate, and the duty of “safe” professors to obey them here; but we do say it is contrary to the whole trend of modern thought, from the Renaissance down, and utterly repugnant to the men who live, move, and have their intellectual being within the walls of a free and independent University College. Such shackling of the intellect in the schools of Trinity College—and Dr. Hogan includes law as well as medicine with science, philosophy, and history, ancient

and modern—would be her immediate ruin, and no man who had breathed her refreshing, invigorating air would long submit to the stifling atmosphere of the Middle Ages transported into her Grecian courts.

By establishing this federal scheme the students will be driven into hostile camps, and Mr. Bryce's airy optimism that the students will be drawn into friendly rivalry, to the promotion of good-fellowship and kindly feeling, shows a want of humour, as well as of foresight, which would be laughable were it not so serious. How can there be friendly rivalry between the Roman Catholic students of Cork, the Church of Ireland students of Dublin, and the Presbyterian students of Belfast? It is possible to have this among the constituent Colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, but an examination of the map of Ireland and a railway time-table would show Mr. Bryce (we will not couple him with a schoolboy) the absurdity of such a view. The new college in Dublin and Trinity College would indeed have rivalry, but the rivalry would not be friendly. Driven into these hostile camps, labelled Protestant and Catholic, the old traditions, the old hate and animosity, which we are happy to think men are rapidly forgetting in Ireland to-day, would be revived with all the old passion and all the old disastrous results. As has well been said, the floor of the new university would be a cockpit, with the various colleges spoiling for a fight. We shrink from the contemplation of such a catastrophe; and nothing more disastrous in the way of a scheme could be conceived, than that which would lead to the spectacle of its total wreckage at the first conferring of degrees. When the police of Dublin had to be called in to clear the hall of the Royal University buildings at a recent conferring of degrees, where the overwhelming majority were Roman Catholics, what, may we ask, would happen with rival bodies struggling for the mastery to the tunes of "God Save the King," "The Boyne Water," and "The Boys of Wicklow"? And all this the result of a well-meant scheme, by a benevolent man of most mature years, for the settlement of

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the Irish University question, in accordance with Roman Catholic claims!

We have dealt so far with the so-called federal scheme on its merits, and all the fair speaking and optimism of Mr. Bryce fails to convince us that it contains a single merit worthy of the name. It is absolutely destructive of the great seat of learning most nearly concerned, impracticable in working, not final in the settlement, and satisfies no one. There remains the dual scheme, one more attractive at first sight, and apparently more easily to be carried out—that is, a new Roman Catholic College, an equivalent to Trinity College, under the University of Dublin. This is the scheme which Archbishop Walsh strongly favours; but not so the body of bishops, as far as we can learn. It would be the destruction of the Royal University to a very great extent, in withdrawing the preponderating body of students from it to the new institution, thus leaving the Queen's Colleges to work out their own salvation as best they might. But all that has been said against the federal scheme from the point of view of the governing body, the appointment of professors, the selection of courses, and the segregation of students into hostile and rival camps, equally applies here. Trinity College would never submit to it, and if she did it would be to her degradation. Equal facilities for education such as are wanted and equal endowment are easily granted, inasmuch as this is a question of financial arrangement. But when the Roman Catholic hierarchy demand equality of status—they are demanding what no State aid can give, nor the ingenuity of Parliament can devise. The great prestige of Trinity College cannot be transferred by any act of the Legislature to a new-born educational institution, however great the desire to do so may be. Harmony between the two Colleges would be absolutely essential to the success of this or any other scheme, and harmony there would not be in the dual no more than in the federal scheme. Sectarianism would enter, with all its virus, into every phase of the work of the two institu-

tions, and every one in Ireland, and every one who knows the working of Irish institutions, know it. To try and brush this aside, as Mr. Bryce attempted, with "There cannot be Protestant mathematics and Catholic mathematics" is simply political platform talk intended to dull the senses of the Liberal voter. Had Mr. Bryce read Dr. Hogan's pamphlet he would not have committed himself to such a platitude; and we welcome the pamphlet for clearing the air as it does, in the matter of the qualifications of the fellows and professors of Trinity College as teachers of Roman Catholic students from the point of view of their Church. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that you can have Protestant mathematics and Catholic mathematics; and every other subject in the University curriculum will be duplicated when it comes to the question of an unsafe man. This is a test, and nothing but a test, and language can make nothing else of it, since it will be absolutely carried out in practice.

Merit, and merit alone, is the avenue to distinction within the present walls of the University of Dublin. Here honours and awards are open to every race and every creed under heaven, and she welcomes all who come and bring brains to her intellectual mint. To change her character, to check her career, to lower her prestige in answer to the cry for religious equality on the one hand, and to the political shibboleths of party on the other, would be a crime disastrous to her and disastrous to the cause of learning in Ireland for many generations to come. Well has she earned better treatment at the hands of the English people. Of all the institutions founded in Ireland since the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1170 she stands supreme. Established by Queen Elizabeth, and by Cambridge and Oxford men, on lands granted by the citizens of Dublin, she stands for freedom of thought and freedom of utterance, worthy of the site she holds—one of the finest in Europe—at the heart of the nation's capital. Proud of her splendid inheritance, untrammelled by any restraints put upon her progress, free from the curse and plague of rival parties,

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religious and political, she pursues her course, working out her own great destiny in the noble pursuit of truth. Stamping her own individuality upon her sons, they have proved no unworthy children to their *alma mater*. Responding to the call of Empire, they have ever given their life and service to its cause in whatever field duty led them, and from the days of James Ussher until now, the names of many of those that left her gates are empanelled amongst the greatest in the nation's history. While true to the call of the Empire, she has ever been true to the call of Ireland's needs and Ireland's wants. The statues of Burke and Goldsmith stand within the entrance railings facing Grattan, with hand outstretched, as if thundering for the independence of Ireland's Parliament; and never had Ireland a cause worthy to defend that Trinity College did not give a man to defend it. Ungrateful indeed will be the nation that would deprive her of her great inheritance, and degrade her proud head to the level of a provincial institution. Rather would her sons see the full whirlwind of destruction fall upon her, levelling her to the foundations in the dust, and her site sown with salt, than such a degradation as this should be her fate.

She stands before the world to-day proudly conscious of her own superiority, her dignity, her intellectual merits, and the great record of noble work accomplished, conscious that she is free of anything unworthy of her academic honour or of any duty neglected. She demands at the hands of the British people, who have ever been the champions of liberty, to retain the full possession of her charter of freedom, and to remain what she has ever been, a foremost figure in the great republic of science and letters.

X.

# GHOSTS OF PICCADILLY

HARRIOT MELLON

**A** GLORIOUS, gorgeous creature was Harriot Mellon, who became Mrs. Coutts and afterwards Duchess of St. Albans, and her bright, comely face and jolly presence are a joyful memory of Piccadilly.

To write much of her earlier history is beyond my province, but something of it you must know if you are rightly to appreciate her. If you would know more, I commend to you the two volumes about her published in 1839, soon after her death, by Mrs. Cornwall Barron-Wilson, reasonably well written and full of curious glimpses of the life led by poor strolling players and successful London players of those days, with their patrons and parasites. There's her mother, for example, a character I wonder Thackeray never made his own, an Irish peasant turned hanger-on of the boards, enormously vain, violent, greedy, exceeding beautiful, not without a sense of duty towards her daughter and full of great ambitions for her. She was the more beautiful of the two, as Harriot always maintained, a brunette like her daughter, but with a fine oval face, whereas Harriot's was of a merry Irish roundness; like her daughter, she had beautiful teeth and black hair and a sweet voice. As for Mellon père, he was an agreeable mystery. The known fact was that a handsome young man, calling himself Lieutenant Matthew Mellon, came to Cork, where Harriot's mother was a girl in a mantua shop, and became the father of



Harriot. The mother said, firstly, that he made her an honest woman and, secondly, that his name was not really Mellon at all, but that he was a great young man incognito. Harriot, a person of sense, liked to believe the former statement and laughed at the latter. But her mother, though she never saw Mr. Mellon again, insisted always on his noble birth—why did not Thackeray draw her?—and would end her scoldings of Harriot with “*You to do so, Harriot, with such high blood in your veins!*” Like many other excellent comedians in private life, she was no use on the boards, never in fact got beyond being dresser and money-taker. Whether she married Mr. Mellon or not, it is certain that she married, a few years later, one Mr. Entwistle, who is pleasantly described by Mrs. Barron-Wilson as “the son of a very respectable person, who occasionally played the organ at Wigan.” Music ran in the family, more or less, for our Mr. Entwistle performed in the orchestra at the theatre. Otherwise he was not of much account. When Harriot became prosperous she got him the position of Postmaster at Cheltenham, where he passed his declining years in the neglect of his duties and the consumption of beer. I must not linger over these good people, but it is to be said for them that though they were not always kind to poor Harriot—the mother was often brutal—and were always eager to sponge on rich Harriot, they educated her as well as they could and were efficient guardians of her respectability.

Few young women have been better fitted than Harriot Mellon was to make the best of the rough and tumble in a strolling player's life. She had health and high spirits. Like her mother she was hot-tempered, but, at this period at least, she was placable and—then and always—the soul of good nature. She was popular with her comrades, and made good friends with “respectable” people, whom her playing first attracted and her merry kindly nature confirmed in affection. She was bred to live hardly when it was needful, and born to live heartily when it was possible. Yes, beyond question

Harriot enjoyed herself very well as a strolling player. Also she was a good girl.

It was at Stafford that the great Mr. Sheridan saw her and promised her an engagement at Drury Lane. He was member for Stafford then—in 1794—and had come down to act as steward for the races. But Sheridan's promises were frail things, and it took much reminding from constituents who loved Harriot before he kept this one. Eventually, however, he kept it, and three years later she was installed in Drury Lane. And there she stayed for twenty years. It is improbable that she was anything like a great actress. She was fortunate in having been brought up to read for herself and to admire, and in having a quick and retentive memory. A "quick study" was in those days, when plays changed so often, more valuable than now, and Miss Mellon profited much by the accidental or unforeseen abstention of others. Then she was clever, and had constitution and good looks. Not that she was a great beauty. She was, a contemporary player records, "merely a countrified girl, blooming in complexion, with a very tall, fine figure, raven locks, ivory teeth, a cheek like a peach, and coral lips." Ah, well, these be good things truly even though, as he says, all they put you in mind of was "a country road and a pillion." Naturally, though she played a multitude of parts, she was best in country, bouncing ones—was a famous Audrey, and a splendid Peggy in *The Country Girl*.

I cannot keep my hands off one behind-the-scenes story, because it gives one the air and atmosphere of the life, and brings in Dicky Suett, a comedian whom Charles Lamb has made a lovable memory. She was playing Lydia Languish, and determined to make up fair, for, like other brunettes, as Mrs. Barron-Wilson says, Harriot of all things admired a transparent complexion. So she covered her face with powder, and covered the powder with rouge and made herself a perfect fright, and so played a couple of acts. Dicky, who was to act later in the evening, watched her from the front, and came round to remonstrate. "Why, Peggy, child"—I suppose he



called her Peggy from her famous part—"what a fright you have made yourself! Your little nose, glaring with white, looks broader than it is long, and as for your fat cheeks, they look like two of your landlady's muffins. How dare you put on so much white paint?" Harriot said indignantly that it was only a little powder, but Dicky persisted. "Just let me lengthen the corners of your mouth upwards, and then you will be ready to act as clown in the pantomime. Go and wash your pretty face, Peggy; go and wash your nice brown, merry face!" And Harriot, furious, but knowing that Dicky knew, went to do as she was told. Alas! washing only made the matter worse, for the powder turned into little rolls all over her face. She was barely made presentable in time, but Dicky Suett applauded. "You bear a scolding very well, Peggy, and you've played your character very well also. Now go home and eat some muffins." One has the idea of a cheerful, homely little society behind the scenes of the great theatre, and that leading ladies of those days did not adopt what they believed to be the airs of great ladies.

Yet a great lady Peggy child was to be, for towards the end of her time at the Lane there entered the figure of Mr. Coutts, the great banker. Of himself I have not very much to say. His record is one for Mr. Samuel Smiles's pages rather than for mine. Men who come from Scotland young and poor and die enormously rich in London command my respect, but not necessarily my affection. It is to be said in Thomas Coutts's favour that since his first wife was a housemaid and his second an actress, he seems to have had the courage to "live his own life," which should be possessed by those who live in Piccadilly. He was not a vulgarian either. Rich and self-made men of his generation were frankly proud of their riches (and on the whole I prefer that to the bland irony about money practised by their successors); but if Thomas Coutts made no secret of his wealth when he entertained his friends—and I think the joyous Harriot helped to reveal it—he was a man of taste and dignity. He loved to be taken for a poor

man. In those happy days for millionaires charity might be promiscuous and casual and unscientific; you could go out in poor array, and some charitable and really poor man would press a guinea on you, and you, slyly chuckling, would go home and drop him a handsome cheque. Such things are recorded of Thomas Coutts. A lean, ailing, shabbily dressed figure with a kind face—that is Thomas Coutts, if you meet his ghost at the corner of Stratton Street.

He was a very old man when he encountered Harriot Mellon. It might not be unfair to speak of senile passion, but I think his love was mainly a strong, fatherly affection. And if it is not uncharitable, either, to suppose that she looked with joy to marrying this wealthy old man when his wife, who was a lunatic, should die, she certainly had for him a true affection. Her manner towards him and her tone in speaking of him were always perfect, always dutiful and grateful. When at last his wife died, he was for marriage at once, but she would not. She consented at length to a private marriage in order to nurse him through a serious illness, and the marriage was publicly announced and celebrated on March 2, 1815. She had taken leave of Drury Lane for ever, where one of her last actions was secretly to relieve the necessities of Edmund Kean at the beginning of his career.

So behold Harriot installed at No. 1 Stratton Street, Piccadilly. It is pleasant to think of her there, frankly enjoying her wealth and splendour, and the good things of life, generously sharing them with her friends. She was nearing forty now, and the fine figure was something filled out, but she was handsome and lively and hearty. Great was the hospitality in Piccadilly, and at Holly Lodge, Highgate, and at Brighton—hospitality sometimes abused, but taken very kindly by the great world. Royal Dukes came, but old friends were not sent away. There are various stories of the Coutts's *ménage*. Gronow has one of the eminent jeweller, Hamlet, being brought into the dining-room while they were at dinner, and showing a magnificent diamond cross, which had been worn

the day before at the Coronation of George IV. by the Duke of York. Harriot admired it, and Hamlet wanted for it £15,000. "Bring me a pen and ink," cried Thomas Coutts. Well: we should call it vulgar now, but it is pleasant (as we stand on the railings in Piccadilly and look in at the window) to observe the smiling old gentleman, the grateful Harriot, the admiring guests. Very likely, though, there is a touch of malice in Gronow here. There's another story of Harriot's dressing up as Morgiana, and prancing about with a dagger. All very jolly and gay.

Mr. Coutts was eighty when he married, but he enjoyed Harriot's society until 1822, when he left her his fortune. She continued her generous, expansive, somewhat flamboyant life. It was not all untroubled: the lives of those who have shot up like rockets are seldom untroubled. Blackmailers marked her for their prey, especially blackmailing "literary" blackguards. One of them wrote "The Secret Memoirs of Harriot Pumpkin," which was bought up. As a rule she resisted these gentry with a stout front, and affected a brave indifference, keeping on her table the rags which printed paragraphs about her. Another trouble was that her health was no longer so splendid as it had been, and she lamented that she might no more drink a glass of bitter beer—even as Byron, much about the same time, was lamenting the absence of beer in Italy. But I think we can be sure that she enjoyed herself pretty thoroughly. She gave much—much openly, and more in private—as kind in her way, though far less wisely, as the beneficent lady, her husband's granddaughter, who died in Stratton Street so lately. But it is idle to pretend that the good Mrs. Coutts was not ostentatious, and indeed I think it more fitting to the jolly radiant picture of her that she should have been. Walter Scott, her friend, said she was "without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth," and no doubt he spoke truly: there was no insolence in the display; she just enjoyed her wealth frankly and openly—but display there was. Lockhart describes her arrival at Abbotsford:

Although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue (leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled to Edinburgh), the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying to poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts, her future lord, the Duke of St. Albans, one of his Grace's sisters, a *dame de compagnie*, vulgarly called a "toady," a brace of physicians, for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous; and besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person, she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because in her widowed condition she was fearful of ghosts, and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night.

If Dicky Suett could have foreseen all this when he told Peggy child to go and wash her pretty face! The superstition, by the way—if in these obscurantist days one is allowed to call anything superstition—is truly alleged: she had many superstitions, not being born of an Irish peasant and bred on the stage for nothing. I like the story of this Abbotsford visit. There were several ladies "of high birth and rank" in the house, and these were sniffy and stuffy, as we say, with poor Mrs. Coutts. Happily for her, Walter Scott was a gentleman: he took a marchioness aside after dinner and told her plainly that if she and the others were not disposed to be agreeable to his guest they ought to have left before she came. She told the others, and they came to heel, and presently Mrs. Coutts, her sensitiveness appeased, was telling stories of the stage and joining in the "Laird of Cockpen."

But we must get back to the corner of Stratton Street, which was soon to have a new inmate in the Duke of St. Albans. Mrs. Barron-Wilson gratifies sentiment in saying that he fell in love with Mrs. Coutts. And why not? I too might have fallen in love with her—at his age, for he was much younger than she; at mine, if the dogmatists about these things say true, one would have loved her better when she was Peggy child. And if the sentimentalists demand it there is no reason why she should not have loved the Duke. Let us suppose that the fair exchange of rank and money was merely a convenient addition to a union of hearts. In our

days, when rank means so much less, a renowned mistress of millions would not be thought to have made a tremendous advance in becoming a duchess. Then, of course, it was a nine days' marvel, and even now it seems a pretty, picturesque end to an old tale—the old tale, eternally new, of the humble being exalted.

However much she may have loved her Duke, Harriot cared little for his *milieu*. She contrasted it with the atmosphere of the boards, where it was “all cheerfulness—all high spirits—all fun, frolic and vivacity,” whereas here everything was “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable.” The friend she was speaking to made the tactless suggestion that the difference was only that she was older, but Harriot would not have it. “In high life,” said she, “there is no such thing as youth; people are old when they first come out; they are too fine and fastidious to enjoy anything.” Since youth is always youth, it would seem that the youth of her new circle was not frank and familiar with Harriot, which was stupid on its part and a great pity.

Ten years of her Duke and his *milieu* she had, and then she died, in 1837, at the age of sixty. She fell ill at Holly Lodge, but insisted on being taken to Stratton Street. They made her bed in the drawing-room, for the advantage of the air, but she bade them take her to Tom Coutts's room, to die on his bed. When Lady Guilford, one of Mr. Coutts's daughters, came to her, she said that he had taken the shape of a little bird, singing at her window, just as he said he would if he could, and it is related that the old man had really made her this strange promise on his death-bed, and that even when well and strong she had believed in it, and would be happy when a bird had fluttered near her window. The vulgar cynics had laughed, but here at least we are, I think, at one with the biographer in seeing true love and kindness. Yes, it is a strange and true romance, that of old Tom Coutts and his Harriot, a strange and gracious memory for Piccadilly.

G. S. STREET.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

**T**O prevent misconception of the treatment which this much-debated subject is to receive in the present article, it may be stated at the outset that it is an endeavour to show that the extension of the franchise to women would be detrimental rather than beneficial to the *welfare of the community as a whole*.

It does not, indeed, require more than the average endowment of the faculty of looking ahead to perceive that in the political enfranchisement of women there can be no half measures, and that, *in the long run*, the franchise must be extended to all women or to none at all.<sup>1</sup> At present the hardship of non-parliamentary representation does undoubtedly press most heavily on women householders or ratepayers who desire the vote. But the inadequacy of this limit to the non-recognition of women in our present parliamentary system would become apparent as soon as it were removed by the extension of the franchise to this class of women, and followed, as it would inevitably be, by its extension to women lodgers. Women of property would naturally resent the disfranchisement that marriage would bring with it, and women lodgers would be in the same predicament. It is unnecessary to point out the confusion that would arise if some wives—those, namely, who are women of property—had votes and some had

<sup>1</sup> This naturally includes its corollary, manhood suffrage.



not, or if wives and daughters in all classes of society could qualify themselves for the vote by money payments for rooms to their respective husbands and fathers. Or again, take those cases in which the wife and not the husband is the owner of the residence, and in which she and not he would be logically and legally entitled to the vote. In short, there seems no reason why, if women are to have the parliamentary vote, marriage should disqualify them for the exercise of that privilege.

When, therefore, we reflect on the tyranny of taxation without representation, we must also not shut our eyes to the fact that some forms of tyranny—and especially such forms of it as are likely to be exercised by the average fair-minded and conscientious English statesmen towards women and their interests—may be preferable to the political chaos that might ensue if the vote were given to some women and not to all, or if, as an alternative, all women were entitled to enter the political arena with the same rights and on the same footing as men.

It cannot, of course, be denied that here and there are to be found women who have in them the making of politicians, nor can it be asserted that clever women are not clever enough to become politicians or anything else for which intellectual qualifications are necessary. But this does not upset the view held by many people as to the inherent unfitness of women in the aggregate to participate, on similar lines with men, in the political life of this country.

The main feature of this unfitness seems to lie in the simple fact of a woman being a woman, and in all that womanhood involves and implies, both as regards physical and social functions. This statement is vague, but he who runs may read, and read into it much that cannot be said here, and that need not be, since it is a part of common daily experience.

The great and uncompromising gulf which nature has placed between the sexes, seems to be accentuated rather than

bridged over by the refinements of civilisation,<sup>1</sup> and the result of this increasing differentiation in physique shows itself in many ways, but mostly, perhaps, in the highly emotional nature of woman and in her variability. *Souvent femme varie!* These words are no more familiar than true, and the same may be said of Scott's oft-quoted refrain on some of the characteristics, charming and otherwise, of the sex.

It would, however, at the present day—when we are confronted with a new order of psychological philosophy known as “Pragmatism,” which lays great emphasis on the emotional element in all intellectual processes—be unwise to underrate the part contributed by feeling and sentiment towards the formation of the political convictions of either sex. But however this may be, it must be admitted that the emotional nature of woman, all valuable as it is as an incentive to many activities in the home and beyond it, is not to be relied on for guidance when the matter in question is one in which the hereditary instincts and intuitions of her sex cannot help, and which calls for farsightedness, broadmindedness, logical reasoning and impartiality—in short, for all the qualities which go to make what we call a well-balanced mind. Such a type of mind is not too common in either sex, but the contention here is that it is much more rarely found in a woman than in a man.

Ignorance of politics and absence of interest in them is not a prerogative of either sex, an assertion which will be

<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. G. Wells, writing on this differentiation between the sexes in his book, “A Modern Utopia,” says :

“The trend of evolutionary forces through long centuries of human development has been on the whole towards differentiation. An adult white woman differs far more from a white man than a negress or pigmy woman from her equivalent male. The education, the mental disposition, of a white or Asiatic woman reeks of sex; her modesty, her decorum, is not to ignore sex but to refine and put a point to it; her costume is clamorous with the distinctive elements of her form. The white woman in the materially prosperous nations is more of a sexual specialist than her sister of the poor and austere peoples, of the prosperous classes more so than the peasant woman.”



borne out by many who engage in the work of canvassing for elections, parliamentary or otherwise. But the importance of granting or withholding the vote does not depend on the attitude of incompetent voters of either sex towards the franchise, since, in the political game, the ignorant and non-reflecting members of the community must always be the prey of the clever, and their votes represent not the convictions or even the opinions of the voters but the electioneering spoils of the most adroit canvassing. *Apropos* of the extension of the franchise to women on the ground of the incompetency of masses of male voters, Ruskin's remark in "Arrows of the Chace" may well be quoted here. "So far," he says, "from wishing to give votes to women, I would fain take them from most men."

Turning to another aspect of the question of female parliamentary representation, we may consider the application to it of the principle that fitness to exercise new powers and responsibilities can only be acquired or proved by affording opportunities for its use.

Here we find ourselves drawn into a comparison with the laws which govern physical as well as social evolution. The evolution and development of any physical function depends on its use, and disuse means, in the long run, atrophy. Similarly with social functions, use brings increase of power to use, and inaction incapacity, and in both cases habit becomes, as we say, "second nature."

"And the moral of that is"—easy to see, and to apply to the case in point. Given the opportunity to become practical politicians, and to play a full part with men in the rough-and-tumble game of party politics in England, women might, at least the majority of thinking women might, develop the fitness for this new departure in their activities, but *at what price?*

Mr. Asquith, in his recent reply to an address presented to him by a deputation of East Fife ladies, hints at the possible "price" in the following ominous words:

Better that no addition should be made to the opportunities for ventilating, and perhaps remedying, special grievances or special interests of particular classes of women than that they should be dearly purchased in the interests of the sex and of the community at large; if at the same time you may have to pay as your price for suffrage—and I am very much afraid you would have to pay it—the putting in jeopardy of the status, the position, the real authority, the unique influence of women as a whole in the community. The one thing sounds tangible and direct, the other intangible, almost abstract; but you must weigh them against one another. You may be sure that any change of this kind will not commend itself to the general opinion and the intelligence of the nation unless you can satisfy them that you can carry it through without permanent injury to the best interests of women themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Such are the apprehensions of a modern statesman, and from them we can turn our minds backwards through the years and recall some not unsimilar forebodings on the part of John Bright, when he saw the vote exercised in municipal elections by the women of Lancashire. He says :

I know one place in my own neighbourhood where scenes of the most shocking character took place. Women were served with what certainly was not good or wholesome for them until the poll closed. I know at another borough in Lancashire at the last general election there were women by hundreds drunk and disgraced under the temptations that were offered in the fierceness and unscrupulousness of a political contest. . . . I confess I am unwilling, for the sake of women themselves, to introduce them into the contest of our Parliamentary system. I think they would lose much of that which is best that they now possess, and that they would gain nothing from being mingled or mixed with the contest and the polling-booth.

Let us hope that the conditions which John Bright describes here are now an impossibility under any political system in this country, but his concluding words fit the situation as much to-day as when they were uttered, and express a sentiment which is very widely spread amongst men, and which still numbers amongst its sympathisers many women.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from a report of the speech which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*.

<sup>2</sup> With apologies to the *St. James's Gazette* for Nov. 1, 1906. (It was only some time after writing the above passage that the writer learnt that this quotation and a similar application of it, strangely enough almost in the same words as those used here, had appeared in that journal.)

So far in this article the question of female suffrage has been approached mainly on the theoretical side, but now let us look at it from the practical point of view and ask, "Do the majority of English women desire the parliamentary vote, and the political status and responsibility which it entails?" Information on this point is difficult to obtain, and even if statistics were available, perhaps knowledge of the *type* of women who desire or who do not desire this change in our political machinery might be a surer guide to its value from the sociological standpoint.

At present nearly all the agitation has been raised by the women who do urgently desire the change, and on the other side there has been mostly silence. But now there are not wanting signs of the times which show that this silence may not always be taken for the slumber of indifference; and it would be dangerous to take for granted that all feminine political interest and activity is on the side of those women whose goal is the political emancipation of their sex. In Mr. Asquith's speech, from which quotation has already been made, he asks: "What is the evidence that the change is desired by the majority of women themselves?" and adds:

I have yet seen no satisfactory evidence on that point, and I do not know that such evidence is procurable. Allow me to assure you that has been a serious hindrance, for this is after all a very great constitutional change, and there is no case in our history in which a constitutional change of this kind has been effected without the clearest possible proof that it was desired and, indeed, demanded by the vast majority of those in whose interest it was made.

These words of Mr. Asquith show the gravity of this "practical" aspect of the question in its strongest light, and need no addition to them here. But whether or no the majority of the women of this country desire the vote, there can be no doubt that in the event of universal adult suffrage, the majority of the *voters* would be *women*, a fact which is sufficiently startling to "give us pause" when we consider its revolutionary features.

A few rough statistics may help to bring this home in a practical sense.

Roughly speaking the male population of the British Isles is twenty millions, the female being twenty-three millions. These figures, of course, include those under age who are not qualified for a vote. But if we divide the numbers roughly, taking the statistical figures of four to a family, we have ten million adult men and eleven and a half million adult women.

These figures do not pretend to be accurate, but—if we once admit the principle that it is the right of women to exercise the franchise on equal terms with men, and if we at the same time recognise a tendency of the times which may eventually lead to manhood suffrage—they serve to indicate a proportion of female voters which is sufficiently formidable to foreshadow a change in our electoral system besides which even the Great Reform Bill shrinks into comparative insignificance!

Such a change might conceivably result in female parliamentary representatives, indeed the outcome of it might even be a preponderance of female Members of Parliament. But the present writer feels unfitted for the task of peering into a political and parliamentary future so far removed from present conditions that it would need the power of a Mr. H. G. Wells to transport us thither.

The return to more beaten tracks leads to the consideration of another practical side of the association of women with politics.

Our existing system, although excluding women as voters, does already allow of a very considerable outlet for feminine political influence and activity, and *with this advantage*, viz., that now those women only who have leisure, taste, and aptitude for the work are drawn into the net.

This, then, is the answer to those who argue that it is absurd to draw the line at full political emancipation for a woman when so many other new doors of activity are open to admit her, at her will. "At her will!" But in the event of

the Suffragists having their way, her "will" is not consulted, and the political responsibility of the vote, and of all that this may ultimately entail, is forced upon her quite apart from her individual wish or fitness to assume this responsibility. And there is another advantage attaching to the political work now undertaken by the women of this country, in that it is mainly concerned with those departments of it in which the natural efficiency of the average woman finds fullest play. Politicians are eager to recognise and to avail themselves of the valuable help rendered by women in the work of political organisation on its social side. This is the side which calls for tact, patience, tolerance of detail, personal sympathy and interest, and many such qualities which are often mostly conspicuous by their absence in the sterner sex. Women suffragists will probably regard such work as this as being on too trivial a scale to satisfy the mildest of their aspirations, and from their own point of view they are of course right not to rest content with it. But even they must admit that it is a sphere of political work which, if not covered by women, is not likely to be covered at all, and also that it is one in which the political ambitions of a good many of their sex find satisfaction.

And now we come to the consideration of that which is, from the national and imperial standpoint by far the most important of the issues involved in throwing open the doors of political life to the women of this country, viz., the possible effect of the movement on the health and on the physical responsibilities of our women, on the mothers of the race. So much might be said upon this side of the question, and so much also that is sufficiently obvious to speak for itself, that it is only necessary here briefly to mention one or two of the more important points connected with it.

The first which comes to mind is the decreasing birth-rate in the upper classes of English society. What effect would the addition of political life, to the many and complex demands now made upon the time and powers of the women of these

classes—in a score of directions undreamed of by their grandmothers—have upon child-bearing? One can almost picture a condition in social life in which women might say, “We have no time for children, our lives are otherwise occupied, our powers must be reserved for other uses!”

Then, take the question of infant mortality among the lower classes. Here generally there is no lack of child-bearing, but a lack of child-rearing. What would be the effect on the mothers in these classes of bringing the contentious influence of party politics into their already crowded and often ill-regulated lives, thus affording them one more opportunity for neglecting to learn how to be useful in their own homes? The woman who is too ignorant or too careless to preserve the lives of her own offspring has no claim or ability to take part in legislation.

Then, again, consider the effects which the excitement of a Parliamentary election, or of any special political agitation, public meetings and the like, might have upon many women in “delicate health,” and especially those of the less protected classes, if called upon or at least entitled to take part in it all and swell the numbers of their respective political parties. Surely the community, which does not permit its women to “take up arms” in its cause, has some right to shelter them from the risks attendant upon political warfare.

Apart from these special considerations there is the general increase of wear and tear, and of mental and nervous strain, upon the more delicate frame and constitution of woman, which is entailed by her entrance into political life, and which cannot fail to leave its mark on her physique, and, if on her physique, ultimately on that of the race.

In short, there seems so little to be said in favour of political life for woman from the point of view of her physical well-being, that that little must be left to others to discover. It will probably be urged that women voters would conduce to the passing of measures for the redress of woman’s grievances and wrongs, and thus tend to promote in general ways the physical well-being of the sex. But people who argue thus



seem to forget that it does not need the practical machinery of a Parliament elected in part by women's votes to redress women's wrongs, otherwise women would not hold the high position or wield the powerful influence in political and many other circles which is theirs to-day. The statesmen whose work and achievements will stand the test of time are those who recognise that the best interests of women are bound up with those of the race,<sup>1</sup> although not all such men may hold that their interests may be best served by inviting women themselves to drive the political machinery which is, after all, but the means to their end. As well might it be said that children's votes are needed to further the interests of children (not that any comparison between women and children is here intended); and yet, so susceptible are the hearts of even male legislators towards the claims of the most powerless members of the community, that one of the saddest of their evils, child-labour in mines, found its remedy mainly through the emotional havoc wrought by a poem, and by a poem written by a woman.<sup>2</sup>

Child-labour in *mines* is no more, but child-labour in *homes*, and of a dreary and deadening description, is still with us, as we learn from the report of recent investigations made by the Home Office into the work of "juvenile carders" in Birmingham. And it is much to be regretted that the women who waste their strength in combats with the police, and their time in Holloway Prison, cannot find in this or kindred objects a more enticing field for the zeal they display as agitators.

But misdirected energy and sentimentality are among the political curses of our age and country, and women of public spirit, whose combined efforts might achieve much useful work, spend their powers in clamouring for the technical

<sup>1</sup> "We hear of the 'mission' and of the 'rights' of woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of man."—RUSKIN ("Sesame and Lilies").

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Cry of the Children." Since this passage was written, Mr. Punch's prophetic soul has announced that "Childhood Suffrage" has only twenty years to wait!

political recognition of the suffrage. As if the suffrage were the panacea for all the ills and disabilities which feminine flesh is heir to, instead of being the merest phantom of one!

They would be better advised to show their ability as politicians by formulating some definite remedial proposals with respect to the grievances for the redress of which they desire the power behind the vote, and in that case they would not improbably find that our present parliamentary system, though it "grinds slowly," is yet sufficiently representative to secure to each section of society its "rights," whether that section be armed with the vote or not.

There is, no doubt, a considerable class of suffragists, and especially of the older type of suffragist, to whom these strictures do not apply. But they probably do apply to a good many of the women agitators of the present day, from whose tactics it may reasonably be surmised that their political outlook is largely bounded by the *idea* of the vote, rather than by the purposes for which the vote is wanted. For instance, in the last raid<sup>1</sup> by the Suffragists on the House of Commons, a good portion of the raiders were said to be extremely young, and it may be naturally inferred from this that their political horizon, though it may have been rosy, was a limited one.

In truth, the disabilities of women in trade, in the labour market, and in every department of life *where she enters into competition with men*, are due, not to want of direct political representation, not to antagonism between the sexes (for such antagonism is, *au fond*, against nature), but to her own natural disabilities, the disabilities of womanhood. The man is first the wage earner, the woman first the mother, and on these two laws hang all, or nearly all, the inequalities which women suffragists are so confident of diminishing by means of women's votes.

There is a side-issue involved in the making of women-politicians which may be touched on in conclusion. One of the weak points in a woman's intellectual activity is said to be

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the one in February.



her absorption in the details of a question, even to the length, sometimes, of blinding her view of the point which is of paramount importance. The truth that lies in this is probably due to the fact that all the details which go to make up the complex structure of modern domestic, family, and social life are, to a very large extent, the woman's province. The adjustment of these details, their organisation and distribution, call for powers and energy of no mean order, and their neglect by women would inevitably result in social chaos. It follows, therefore, that her passion for detail, so far from being detrimental to a woman's mental equipment, is necessary for the preservation of social order; and farther, that, if a woman must divest herself of this or any other valuable characteristic, in order to don the mantle of the politician and the legislator, the community, *as a whole*, stands to gain far less politically than it loses socially, by the political enfranchisement of its women.

E. MAUD SIMON.

## A PLEA FOR SHORTER NOVELS

**T**HERE is a group of questions or phrases almost any one of which can be heard wherever and whenever the subject of books, their writers and their readers, forms the topic of conversation. These questions have been set so frequently that they may now be considered hackneyed or stereotyped. Their substance approximately is this :

1. Why are modern novels "spun out" to such excessive lengths ?
2. Why must a story that could quite well be told in 50,000 or 60,000 words be "padded" out to 100,000 words or more ?
3. By whom is the length of a six-shilling novel regulated—the author, the publisher, the bookseller, or the reading public ?
4. Does the reading public necessarily prefer long novels to short ?
5. Who directly suffers and who directly benefits through books being "padded" and "spun out" ?

Let me frankly state, to begin with, that I not only have occasion to read in the course of the year a great mass of books, the bulk of them modern novels, but that in addition I mix with general readers of vastly different grades and tastes, from the solemn man of letters who confines his reading of fiction to the works of writers of a past generation, leavened with only a few volumes of our more serious modern novelists, down to the utterly bored woman who "skims" half-a-dozen

library books in a morning and then clamours for the names of "some new books that really are worth reading, you know."

This being so, I may, I think, claim a right to enter a plea for the condensation of the majority of our novels that will pour from the press during the next twelve months and long afterwards, and to endeavour to demonstrate in this article the manifold advantages that would accrue to the author, to the public, and I cannot help thinking also to the publisher, if the majority of novels in preparation, instead of being "padded," as they presumably will be, with superfluous and therefore irritating verbiage, were to be cut down by about one-third.

To take the questions in regular rotation—Why are novels "spun out," and what is the object of "padding" them? The reply to this would seem to vary in accordance with certain fixed conditions. Four publishers out of six—I have consulted a great many—will tell you with a bright smile that "It must be done." Then they will grow silent, or else turn the conversation. The fifth will remark with some show of acerbity, "Surely the reason must be obvious!" The sixth will appear to take you into his confidence by declaring that "the booksellers insist." None of which replies can be deemed satisfactory.

Go to the booksellers, and they will advance a good reason at once—"Our customers who buy novels," they will say, "would not look at a six-shilling book if it contained 'short measure.'" Inquire next at the lending libraries, and much the same reply will be given: "Our subscribers won't take out books that look short. They would think they were not getting value for their money. Besides, six-shilling books are always this length, or longer." The last statement is added almost invariably, and possibly it betrays—though I don't wish to pass judgment—the general level of intelligence that marks the rank and file of lending-library managers, especially in provincial towns. Their clerks, as a body, are more sensible.

According to the booksellers and the subscription-library managers, therefore, the generality of our novel-readers actually

prefer to struggle through page after page of utterly wearisome verbiage, that in most cases has nothing to do with the thread of the story and serves only to retard its movement, to reading through in less time a story that is well told, well-knit together, and that consequently compels attention literally from the first page to the last. Is such a statement credible? Surely it would be as rational to argue that a restaurant which provided a dinner of eight courses all of indifferent quality would be more largely patronised than one which provided at the same price a meal of only five courses, but every course well served and of good quality.

From the fact that one hears so many subscribers to lending libraries—and the lending-library public constitutes the great bulk of novel-readers—complaining that most modern novels are unconscionably “padded” and “spun out,” and adding in a matter-of-fact tone that “naturally one skips the rubbishy parts,” it is reasonable to conclude that novel-readers themselves emphatically do not want “padded” books, and that therefore the booksellers are mistaken in believing that they do. Who ever heard a reader recommend a book to a friend “because it is so long”? Indeed as nine-tenths of the subscribers to a lending library skip, as a matter of course, “the rubbishy parts,” the question naturally suggests itself—Why write “rubbishy parts”? Why fill page after page with “padding” when we know in advance that all those pages will most likely be left unread? Assuredly the prevailing practice of “padding” injudiciously must be bad policy from every standpoint, except perhaps the standpoint of the printer. Again the plea will be advanced, “The bookseller insists.” But why does he insist? He would not insist if he did not believe it to be to his advantage. And yet if you put the question to him squarely he cannot give a single valid reason for his dogged insistence that a six-shilling novel, that is to say a novel of the class which he usually stocks, must contain a minimum of so and so many words. His only “reason,” as we have seen, is that six-shilling novels always have, to the best of his know-

ledge, contained that minimum, and so for that "reason," he argues, they must continue to contain it. In short, in common with so many other of his unenterprising and ultra-conservative countrymen who, as an Irishman said once, speaking of such people, "travel always in a rut in every direction but the right one," he will not or dare not attempt to establish a precedent by offering his customers better value of less bulk at the price of bulk only that is of inferior quality. And as the publishers must supply the bookseller with what he asks for, so they go on sending him novels "padded" and "spun out" to an extent that in very many cases destroys the symmetry of the story or transforms what might have been a vivid and "living" romance into an involved or turgid narrative.

Then—By whom is the length of the six-shilling novel regulated? We have seen that it is not regulated by the reading public. Emphatically it is not regulated by the author. Probably there are but few authors—by whom I mean especially novelists—who are not conscious that they could do themselves far more justice if they were not compelled to "pad." None but the veriest "hack," or the writer who does not take any personal pride in his work, can actually wish to "spin out" a story which he could tell better in, let us say, 60,000 words instead of 100,000. But a publisher driven to supply the unreasonable demands of inexorable booksellers becomes himself inexorable and so commissions the author to write a book of not less than 100,000 words, agreeing to pay him for it—when the book is to be bought outright—at the rate of so much a thousand words; and the author has nothing to do but comply. If the publisher offered him a sum equal to fifty per cent. more per thousand words for the same story on the understanding that the story should contain as small a proportion of "padding" as the author deemed to be consistent with good work, and that its maximum length should not exceed, let us say, 70,000 words, none would feel more gratified than the author himself, more particularly as the impression is prevalent among the general reading public

that the author is the person to blame when his books are adjudged too long. Therefore it at once becomes manifest that it is also the bookseller who indirectly regulates the length of novels, in the same way that dressmakers and tailors regulate or create fashions in wearing apparel. Some day, no doubt, booksellers' eyes will be opened to the delusion they have cherished for so many years, that what the reading public wants is quantity rather than quality. As a member of the reading public I can truthfully say that I would sooner pay six shillings net for a readable book containing only 60,000 words, than four shillings and sixpence for a book dragged out to 100,000 words and so rendered more or less "impossible." Moreover, I feel convinced that the great majority of general readers would say the same if the question were put to them.

Next—Does the reading public necessarily prefer long novels to short? I do not think that it "necessarily" prefers long novels, though probably it will choose the longer novel rather than the shorter if a friend who is competent to criticise and who has read both books pronounces the longer to be "good all through." Within the last few years of course long books—books of 150,000 and even 200,000 words—that are "good all through" have been published, but by comparison with the hundreds of books that have been issued which are not "good" even to the end of the first fifty thousand words, their number is infinitesimal. Novelists, indeed, can in some respects be likened to race-horses. A big proportion of our thoroughbreds are, in the vernacular of the Turf, "good to win" a five-furlong race; but how many are "good to stay the distance" in a long race? In just the same way plenty of clever writers of fiction can produce a story of sixty or seventy thousand words in length that is in every way admirable, who break down completely when they try to "stay the distance" in a story covering a hundred and twenty or a hundred and fifty thousand words. In such cases it is not the pace that kills, but the uninterrupted strain.

Again—Who directly suffers and who directly benefits



through books being "padded" and "spun out"? Obviously the reading public is the principal sufferer, but then the reading public is like the rate-paying public, it is not taken into consideration. It has something flung at it in return for payment made, and it ought to feel grateful for that. The next most serious sufferer is the author. Yet inasmuch as he receives payment and gives in return merely the fruit of his brains—a bagatelle, of course—his case is not a hard one, neither is he deserving of sympathy. At least that would seem to be the common impression. Then how about the publisher? Ah, there you come to the kernel of the question. The poor publisher is harassed by booksellers whose obtuseness prompts them to go on demanding long novels, while he, being a man of acumen, knows quite well that the reading public would buy more books and subscribe more largely to the circulating libraries if the books placed upon the market were of smaller bulk but superior quality. Yet he must perforce remain impotent and go on paying printers' inflated bills without openly complaining. Then who does benefit? None, apparently, but the printers and the paper-makers.

Emphatically, therefore, it is time that the modern novel should be metamorphosed. Lord Northcliffe inaugurated the era of our up-to-date tabloid journalism. Who is going to inaugurate the era of up-to-date capsuloid fiction? That the change is bound to be made is certain, and it needs no prophet to foretell that the bookseller to take the lead in stocking novels whose standard of excellence will be gauged by their literary merit, their dramatic force, and their terse and convincing phraseology rather than by their authors' ability to make twelve words do where half-a-dozen would suffice, is not, to borrow an expressive phrase from America, "going to get left." An American said to me the other day—"Our story-tellers in the States *can write all round* your men," and, though this was an exaggeration, one must admit that two clever American writers of fiction, whose names will suggest themselves to habitual readers of the novels of the two nations,

have lately succeeded in getting placed upon the book market short and admirably done novels of the type that I am endeavouring to recommend.

Another remark often heard in a mixed assemblage of readers and non-readers is—"How is it that nowadays so many inferior novels get published?" The question may well be asked. Setting aside the proportion that is published at their authors' expense, and that needs no comment because the majority of such books practically fall dead from the press, there remains a considerable proportion in which publishers have speculated, with results disastrous to themselves. The knowledge of this naturally gives rise to a feeling of doubt as to whether book-publishers, as a body, are able to gauge accurately the very catholic taste of the reading public. One could name off-hand three or four publishing houses which appear to have an unerring instinct in this connection. It may be intuitive, or it may be the peculiar instinct apparently possessed by the "mental telepathists," but whatever it is it is there, with the result that these houses almost unfailingly publish books which command success from the first. With other certain houses the reverse is the case, and one is led to wonder whether the heads of the latter firms, to say nothing of these firms' staff of readers and literary advisers, are men with enough of general knowledge of the world to render them capable of, so to speak, looking at Life from the many different standpoints of the assemblage which goes to make up what we call "the reading public."

For this power of looking at Life from the standpoints of groups of persons who have views different from our own and different from each other is, I venture to think, a peculiar and very precious gift which but few of us possess, though it can be cultivated and developed by those among us who do possess it. A man who lives metaphorically in a groove, or who mixes only with one set or class of men and women, has little or no opportunity of cultivating the power even if endowed with it. A man of literary tastes, let us say, who gives way to

his natural inclination to mix with literary people only, cannot by any possibility form a just opinion as to what a community composed, for instance, of spinsters of a commonplace order of intelligence and with no aim in life higher than the ambition to get married, is likely to care to read. Yet it is precisely of women of this class, and their relatives, that a sensible proportion of the readers of lending-library books is made up. Consequently should that man happen to be reading for a publishing house, as he is very likely to be, he will be almost certain to reject MSS. which, if published, would appeal to the group referred to, and to its sister groups to be found scattered broadcast over the face of England, and that therefore would prove pecuniarily successful.

Take another case. As publishers' readers are to be found among men in many different walks in life, let us take as an example a literary adviser who at the same time holds a post of private secretary of some kind. We will suppose him to be a man of more or less retiring disposition, conscientious, untravelled, with a sound and classical education. Now, what can that man know of the class and style of book that most appeals to what one may call the "unemotional" country-house division of society? I don't mean, of course, the country-house society that spends half the year in town or in rushing about, and two or three months abroad, but the humdrum country-house population that vegetates in oblivion for eight or ten months out of the twelve. Yet this "body-corporate" also is a strong supporter of the circulating libraries, and its "literary" appetite needs tantalising quite as much as other people's. Let it be added that what has been said of the publisher's literary adviser applies hardly less forcibly to the publisher himself.

Therefore I think I have shown that in a measure the failure of some publishers to gratify the taste of the vastly varied public for which publishers have to cater is due not so much to publishers' and their literary advisers' want of power of discrimination, as to their lack of first-hand knowledge of

the actual requirements of the different bodies which together make up the reading public. "Then," somebody will ask, "what class of men would you recommend for this work, and where are such men to be found?" The set of men I would be so bold as to recommend as publishers' readers is to be found chiefly among the leading newspaper reporters of wide experience. Newspaper reporters, it always seems to me—and I may claim to know something about them—possess a wider knowledge of civilised mankind of almost every rank than is possessed by any other one body of men. It is but natural that this should be so. In the ordinary course of events they are for ever on the move. They are for ever rubbing shoulders with people holding different views upon politics, religion, literature, social conditions, in short almost every conceivable subject, and being *ipso facto* men of quick intelligence and keen observation there are but few striking points in the amazing kaleidoscope of life in its broadest sense that escape their notice. Where, then, could you find men better qualified to give an opinion as to what the general mass of the community is likely to enjoy reading? The publisher's difficulty will of course lie in securing the services of such men.

To return to the novels, and the plea for their compression, I would ask the reader who is sceptical as to the possibility of their being "pruned" to advantage to pick up almost any lending-library volume that he may have by him, and make the experiment for himself. If he does not find a pretty woman "padded" out into "a female possessing considerable personal attractions"; an ocean liner alluded to as "a white towering immensity"; or an Elizabethan mansion of quite ordinary type described in eight or ten lines instead of two, he will come upon phrases and paragraphs of the same nature and equally diffuse. Many persons who read novel after novel mechanically, the while wondering what it is that makes many novels so dull, quite overlook the fact that dullness and want of "holding-power" is eight times out of ten directly due to the book being overloaded with words. A writer who packs five

thousand words into a chapter where four thousand would be ample, makes his story "drag." The writer who crams in six thousand instead of four thousand renders the story practically unreadable. This is the reason that journalistic work generally proves so excellent a training for the writer of fiction. In journalism every sentence, almost every line, has to be condensed as much as possible ; and the journalist able to convey the greatest amount of solid news in the shortest possible space is the man who, other qualifications being equal, will get to the top of his profession the quickest. This power of condensing, indeed, is an art, call it a knack if you will, not acquired easily or in a very short time.

To say that all descriptive passages ought to be omitted from a work of fiction would of course be absurd, but, if I may repeat the hackneyed phrase, there are descriptive passages and descriptive passages. A graphic and really powerful description in writing it is always a delight to read, but how seldom we come across such descriptions. One could count on the fingers of one hand the writers who possess the wonderful gift of painting scenes and scenery in words which seem to bring the picture before one's mental vision as though the whole thing were some sort of conjuring trick. The strenuous attempts of the less-gifted writers who struggle to perform the same trick, but fall short, are as distressing to read as the antics of unskilful acrobats are to watch. Many a modern writer can construct and develop an ingenious plot ; many another can produce readable and in some instances brilliant and witty dialogues ; but the gift of painting in words situations, localities and landscapes is apparently denied to all but a favoured few. For this reason it is to be regretted that more of our novelists of ordinary ability do not cultivate the art of leaving a great deal more to the reader's imagination than they do leave. The practice of describing in detail the features, the expression of the eyes, the exact tint of the hair of the chief characters in a book, not to speak of these characters' general appearance, their dress, and the inflections of tone in their

voices, has fortunately gone out of fashion except among writers of fiction of a very low order. But the habit of loading a story with indifferent descriptive passages still prevails to a great extent, though it might with considerable advantage be dispensed with. A beautiful woman loses her charm when every good point she possesses, from the creamy smoothness of her complexion to the alluring curve of her eye-brow, is described separately and in detail; and in the same way a glorious scenic panorama metaphorically falls flat when every square mile of it is analysed and dissected. These faults are of course commonest among young writers, but they are flagrant enough still among some of our novelists who have served a long apprenticeship.

Lest it be thought that I write in a captious spirit let me add that no such desire is in my mind. I have had the presumption to draw attention to points that have struck me forcibly and on many occasions, and I know that they are points which must frequently strike many thousands of British novel readers. Who ever read a book by Daudet, Hugo, or de Maupassant that brimmed over with superfluous verbiage? It may be said in answer to this that I have selected three of the most polished writers of fiction that France ever possessed. True, but even if the rank and file of the French novelists be studied carefully it will be found that they seldom err upon the side of overloading their work with unnecessary vocables and third-rate descriptive passages. Is it too much to hope that this plea for the condensation and consequent "strengthening up" of the great bulk of our British novels may not have been advanced in vain?

BASIL TOZER.



## A FORGOTTEN POET: JOHN CLARE<sup>1</sup>

### I

**W**E are told in the introduction to a volume of poems by John Clare, published in 1820, "They are the genuine productions of a young peasant, a day-labourer in husbandry, who has had no advantages of education beyond others of his class; and though poets in this country have seldom been fortunate men, yet he is, perhaps, the least favoured by circumstances, and the most destitute of friends, of any that ever existed." If the writer of the introduction had been able to look to the end of the career on whose outset he commented, he would have omitted the "perhaps." The son of a pauper farm labourer, John Clare wrote his earlier poems in the intervals of hard manual labour in the fields, and his later poems in lucid intervals in a madhouse, to which ill-health, overwork, and drink had brought him. In a poem written before he was seventeen he had asked that he might

Find one hope true—to die at home at last,

and his last words, when he died in the madhouse, were, "I want to go home." In another early poem he had prayed,

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Walter T. Spencer, of Oxford Street, for much help in the preparation of this article, and in particular for the loan and for permission to make use of the Clare manuscript in his possession. I wish also to thank Mr. Billingham, bookseller, of Northampton, for his help and for a copy of a letter written by Clare in the asylum.

seeing a tree in autumn, that, when his time came, the trunk might die with the leaves. Even so reasonable a prayer was not answered.

In Clare's early work, which is more definitely the work of the peasant than perhaps any other peasant poetry, there is more reality than poetry.

I found the poems in the fields,  
And only wrote them down,

as he says with truth, and it was with an acute sense of the precise thing he was saying that Lamb complimented him in 1822 on the "quantity" of his observation. It is difficult to know how much of these early poems were tinkered for publication by the too fastidious publisher Mr. Taylor, and what is most smooth and traditional in them is certainly not what is best. The ballads and love-songs have very little value, and there is often a helplessness in the language, which passes from the over-familiar to the over-elevated. Later on he would not have called the glow-worm "tasteful illumination of the night," nor required so large a glossary of provincialisms. As it is, when he is not trying to write like Burns, or in any way not quite natural to him, he gives us, in a personal and unusual manner, a sense of the earth and living things, of the life of the fields and farmyards, with a Dutch closeness, showing us himself,

Toiling in the naked fields,  
Where no bush a shelter yields,

in his hard poverty, and with his sensitiveness to weather, not only as it helps or hinders his labour. You see him looking up from it, looking and listening, and noting down everything he has observed, sometimes with this homely detail :

Now buzzing, with unwelcome din,  
The heedless beetle bangs  
Against the cow-boy's dinner-tin  
That o'er his shoulder hangs.

No one before him had given such a sense of the village, for Bloomfield does not count, not being really a poet ; and no one

has done it so well again until a greater poet, Barnes, brought more poetry with him. Clare's poetry begins by having something clogging in it; substance, and poetical substance, is there, but the poetry has hardly worked its way out to freedom.

That it should have got so far on the way there is one of the most astonishing things in literature. These poems, in which there is so much that is direct and novel, were scribbled on scraps of paper in the intervals of a life which had never had what is called a single "advantage." John Clare was born, says his biographer Martin, in "a narrow wretched hut, more like a prison than a human dwelling; and the hut stood in a dark, gloomy plain, covered with stagnant pools of water, and overhung by mists during the greater part of the year." This hut was in the little village of Helpston, which lies between Stamford and Peterborough, and Clare was born there, prematurely, and one of twins, on July 13, 1793. The father was dependent through ill-health on parish relief, and the chief food of the family was potatoes and water-gruel. At seven years of age Clare was sent to look after sheep and geese on the heath, and at twelve worked in the fields, though with hardly strength enough for the lightest labour. When he was a very small child he had set out one day to walk as far as the sky, that he might touch it, and when he was older he fancied that there were ghosts ready to attack him in the swamps, and as he was seen reading books among his cattle, and talking to himself, people thought him something of a lunatic. His head had been filled with old songs from the time he was seven, by an old woman who kept the cows near where he kept the sheep, and he had learned to read and write at night-classes after his work was over, and had tried in vain to learn algebra as a kind of magic speech. He fell in love with Mary Joyce, but her father, when he found it out, would not let the "beggar-boy" see her any more. She was never wholly out of his mind, and came back finally into it long afterwards, when he was mad, and seemed more actual than his living wife.

He was thirteen when the sight of Thomson's "Seasons" showed him that he was a poet. He read it twice through under the wall of the park, and scribbled down on a piece of paper the lines which were afterwards to come out as "The Morning Walk." From that time he wrote verses on scraps of paper, which he would stuff in a hole in the wall, and his mother would use for lighting the fire. He worked for some time among the gardeners in Burghley Park, and was taken by them on their drunken carouses, and would sometimes lie all night in the open air in a drunken sleep. Then he ran away, and at last went back to his home, where he returned to farm work. He showed some of his verses to a foolish person who asked him if he had learned grammar. The endeavour to learn grammar hindered him for some time from writing any more verses, and then he enlisted in the makeshift army that was to repel Bonaparte when he attacked England, and soon came back helplessly with a "Paradise Lost" and part of the "Tempest." He again fell in love, and as that came to nothing, joined the gipsies, who taught him to play the fiddle, but he was not with them long. Then he found work at a lime-kiln, where he had hard work, but enough leisure to write half a dozen songs in the course of a day. It was at this time, in 1817, that he met Martha Turner, the "Patty" of some of his poems, whom he married, after many hesitations and differences, in 1820, a month before the birth of a child.

Between the meeting with "Patty" and his marriage Clare had come to almost literal beggary, and had put down his name, like his father, as a pauper claiming relief from the parish. He had spent a guinea in printing a hundred copies of a prospectus, which he called "Proposals for publishing by Subscription a Collection of Original Trifles on Miscellaneous Subjects, Religious and Moral, in Verse, by John Clare of Helpston." Only seven subscribers could be found, and it seemed as if the poems would never be printed, when by good luck they fell into the hands of a Stamford bookseller called

Drury, who, after many delays, and against the advice of a Rev. Mr. Twopenny, of the parish, sent them up to his relative, Mr. Taylor, of the firm of Taylor and Hessey, Keats' publishers, who saw their value, announced them in the first number of their new *London Magazine*, and on January 16, 1820, published "Poems descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery, by John Clare, a Northamptonshire Peasant," with an introduction, written by Mr. Taylor, which was almost an appeal for charity. The success was immediate: praise in the *Quarterly*, which had just attacked Keats, praise in all the reviews; Madame Vestris recites some of the poems at Covent Garden, and Rossini sets one of them to music. Clare is taken to London and has a wild week of dinner parties and theatres. In his own neighbourhood lords have thrown guineas into his lap and asked him to dinner, but in the servants' hall; here he dines by their side, dressed in a smock-frock covered by a borrowed overcoat, and makes good and helpful friends in Lord Radstock and the kind, flighty Mrs. Emmerson; and goes back to his home, to be ceaselessly called out of the fields where he is labouring by a succession of idle interviewers, not yet deadly and professional. Subscriptions are raised, the money is invested for him, and he finds himself with an income of £45 a year.

On that income Clare thought he could live without working. By day he wandered in the open air or sat writing in the hollow of an old oak; at night he sat in the inn-parlour and received his admirers. He bought Burns and Chatterton, and people sent him books. In 1821 he brought out a new book, "The Village Minstrel," containing better poems; but the novelty had gone off, and readers, after all, had been more interested in the peasant than in the poet. He had already tempered that "rustic Cockneyism, as little pleasing as ours of London," which Lamb was afterwards to counsel him against, and he would no longer allow his publisher to correct what he wrote, except in grammar or spelling. In 1822 he went for the second time to London, and stayed there long enough to

get well acquainted with London taverns and slums, and to fall in love with Mlle. Dalia, of the Regency Theatre, and to write love-songs to the young wife of old Cary, taking her to be his daughter, and meaning it as a polite compliment. He met Gifford and Murray, and supped with Lamb.

The freedom and gaieties of London had done Clare no good. He wrote verses copiously, and tried to make better bargains in selling them. But he could get nothing, and the little money he had dwindled away, and he stinted himself in food and soon got seriously ill. Whenever he got a little better he would sit out of doors, soaking himself in sunlight, until he had brought on a relapse. At last Mr. Taylor took him up to London, where he began to recover, and would spend the whole day looking out of a window on the ground floor into Fleet Street. Through the glass he could for the first time look calmly at the beautiful women who seemed to him to make up the enchantment of London. At Taylor's house he met Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey; and, getting into the crowd at Byron's funeral, was knocked into the mud, and his only good clothes were spoiled. On going back to Helpston he gave up drink and lived on bread and vegetables, which weakened him so much that he was unable to do the draining and ditching work which he had got with difficulty; and, writing to Taylor, he says: "I live here among the ignorant like a lost man."

The circumstances of Clare's life prevented him from being what he had at least some of the impulse to be: a natural man whose thoughts came to him in verse, and who put down his feelings just as they came to him. He had an instinctive facility which he sometimes took to be literal inspiration, and obeyed too literally. At other times he forced himself to write at full speed in the continually deluded hope of making money. Sometimes his poverty and his cares, sometimes drink, sometimes what was almost starvation, prevented him from writing at all. His pension of £45 was not enough on which to keep himself, his wife, his children, his



father and his mother. Sometimes he could not get work when he wanted it, and sometimes he had not the strength to do it when he had got it. He took every help and advice that was given to him, but was never able to turn either to account.

"The Village Minstrel" had had little success; "The Shepherd's Calendar," published in 1827, was almost unnoticed. Clare went again to London, to be the guest of Mrs. Emerson, with whom he had imagined himself to be so madly in love; and in London accepted the dubious advice of his publisher to buy back the remainder of his books at cost price and to hawk them himself about the country. He returned home suddenly, coming back to the house in Stratford Place and saying, "I must go," because in walking over Primrose Hill he had come upon a violet.

Clare tramped the country for twenty or thirty miles a day, and at the most sold two or three volumes in the course of a week. Then he advertised that the books were to be bought at his cottage, and was sometimes invited to the big towns in the neighbourhood, and once walked as far as the coast, and saw the sea for the first time, and the sight kept him awake all night. Then came sickness, and debts, and Clare tried to write for the annuals, which he hated, and which sometimes forgot to pay him; and then, with the help of Allan Cunningham, who was always a good friend to him, he took to farming again, and for a year seemed to be almost prosperous. Next year he began to sicken again, and one of the "noble patrons," meaning it for the best, gave him a pleasant new cottage at Northborough, three miles from Helpston. To leave his native place and the cottage where he had always lived was more than he could bear. As the time came near, he roamed about, muttering incoherently, and the people thought he was going mad. When he got to the new cottage he wrote one of the finest of his lamentations over his old home. A seventh child was born that winter, and Clare wept when he saw it. Sickness returned to him, and his

whole mood seemed to change; he would not go out, but sat indoors reading theological books, and writing paraphrases of Job and the Psalms. One day he said that he had seen his old sweetheart pass the window, and he wrote some lines to her, which he showed to a friend, who rightly thought them beautiful. But the friend did not know that Mary had long been dead.

Clare now began to speak of himself in the third person, and thought that his wife and children were strangers. He recovered a little, and wrote a pathetic letter to Taylor, wanting to consult a certain doctor in London before it was too late. "Mrs. Emmerson, I think, has forsaken me," he wrote. "I do not feel neglect now as I have done; I feel only very anxious to get better." No one would give him the money to go to London and back, and he gave up all effort, and was sometimes calm and rational, and sometimes talked, as John Clare, to Mary, treating his wife as if she were not there. His new book of poems, "The Rural Muse," was now published, containing only a small selection from the verse which he had written, and was generously welcomed by John Wilson in *Blackwood's Magazine* for August 1835, and then dropped quietly out of sight.

Meanwhile Clare began to show violent excitement, and one night, when he had gone to the theatre at Peterborough with the bishop's wife, he shouted at Shylock from the box and tried to get upon the stage. It was not at first realised that this was more than a poet's eccentricity, but before long Earl Fitzwilliam proposed that Clare should be sent to the county asylum. At the same time Taylor offered to send him to Dr. Allen's private asylum at High Beach, in Epping Forest, where he was treated with great kindness, and set to work in the garden, and allowed to take long walks, often in the company of Tom Campbell, the son of the poet. He wrote a number of poems, some of them addressed to Mary. In the early summer of 1841 he escaped from the asylum and made his way homeward on foot. The narrative which he

afterwards wrote in the form of a journal tells the whole story of the terrible journey with marvellous precision. "I seemed to pass the milestones very quick in the morning," he says, "but towards night they seemed to be stretched further apart." He started early on the morning of July 20, without a penny in his pocket, and on the 23rd had come nearly to the journey's end, when, as he says,

a cart met me, with a man, woman, and a boy in it. When nearing me the woman jumped out and caught fast hold of my hands, and wished me to get into the cart. But I refused; I thought her either drunk or mad. But when I was told it was my second wife Patty, I got in, and was soon at Northborough. But Mary was not there, neither could I get any information about her, further than the old story of her having died six years ago. But I took no notice of the lie, having seen her myself twelve months ago, alive and well, and as young as ever. So here I am hopeless at home.

He wrote a letter to Mary, calling her "my dear wife," and saying, "I have written an account of my journey, or rather escape, from Essex, for your amusement."

At Northborough Clare was visited by two country doctors, who signed the certificate which was to shut him up in the Northampton Asylum for the remaining twenty-two years of his life, on the ground of having spent "years addicted to poetical prosings." In a letter dated March 8, 1860, now preserved in the public library at Northampton, he wrote to a Mr. Hopkins:

DEAR SIR,—I am in a madhouse. I quite forget your name or who you are. You must excuse me, for I have nothing to communicate or tell of, and why I am shut up I don't know. I have nothing to say, so I remain yours respectfully,

JOHN CLARE.

Neither wife nor children ever came to see him, except the youngest son, who came once. He sat most of the time in a recess in one of the windows, looking out over the garden and the town, and would sometimes sit under the porch of All Saints' Church, watching the children play and looking up into the sky. When he could no longer walk he was wheeled into the garden, and before he died he crept once or twice to

the window, to look out. He died on May 20, 1864, and was buried under a sycamore tree at Helpston, as he had wished to be:

The grave below ; above, the vaulted sky.

## II

It must not be assumed that because Clare is a peasant, his poetry is in every sense typically peasant poetry. He was gifted for poetry by those very qualities which made him ineffectual as a peasant. A common error about him is stated by Mr. Lucas in his *Life of Lamb*: "He was to have been another Burns, but succeeded only in being a better Bloomfield." The difference between Clare and Bloomfield is the difference between what is poetry and what is not, and neither is nearer to or farther from being a poet because he was also a peasant. The difference between Burns and Clare is the difference between two kinds and qualities of poetry, and no comparison is called for. Burns was a great poet, filled with ideas, passions, and every sort of intoxication ; but he had no such minute local love as Clare, nor, indeed, so deep a love of the earth. He could create by naming, while Clare, who lived on the memory of his heart, had to enumerate, not leaving out one detail, because he loved every detail. Burns or Hogg, however, we can very well imagine at any period following the plough with skill or keeping cattle with care. But Clare was never a good labourer ; he pottered in the fields feebly, he tried fruitless way after way of making his living. What was strangely sensitive in him might well have been hereditary if the wild and unproved story told by his biographer Martin is true : that his father was the illegitimate son of a nameless wanderer, who came to the village with his fiddle, saying he was a Scotchman or an Irishman, and taught in the village school, and disappeared one day as suddenly as he had come. The story is at least symbolic, if not true. That wandering and strange instinct was in his blood, and it spoiled the peasant in him and made the poet.

Clare is said to have been barely five feet in height, "with keen, eager eyes, high forehead, long hair, falling down in wild and almost grotesque fashion over his shoulders." He was generally dressed in very poor clothes, and was said by some woman to look "like a nobleman in disguise." His nerves were not the nerves of a peasant. Everything that touched him was a delight or an agony, and we hear continually of his bursting into tears. He was restless and loved wandering, but he came back always to the point from which he had started. He could not endure that anything he had once known should be changed. He writes to tell his publisher that the landlord is going to cut down two elm-trees at the back of his hut, and he says: "I have been several mornings to bid them farewell." He kept his reason as long as he was left to starve and suffer in that hut, and when he was taken from it, though to a better abode, he lost all hold on himself. He was torn up by the roots, and the flower of his mind withered. What this transplanting did for him is enough to show how native to him was his own soil, and how his songs grew out of it. Yet the strange thing is that what killed him as a human mind exalted him as a poetic consciousness, and that the verse written in the asylum is of a rarer and finer quality than any of the verse written while he was at liberty and at home.

Clare educated himself with rapidity, and I am inclined to doubt the stories of the illiterate condition of even his early manuscripts. His handwriting, in a letter written in 1825, enclosing three sonnets on the death of Bloomfield, contained among the Bloomfield Papers in the British Museum, is clear, energetic, and fluent, very different from the painful and incompetent copy-book hand of Bloomfield; and the only oddity is that the sonnets are not punctuated (anticipating Mallarmé), and that the sign for "and" is put, whimsically enough, at the beginning of a line. The pencil scribble on the back of a letter dated 1818 of a poem published in 1820, is in no sense illiterate. We know from Mrs. Emerson's letters in the Clare Papers in the British Museum that by 1820 he was familiar with Percy's

"Reliques," and in the same year she sends him Coleridge's and Akenside's poems, and "two volumes of miscellaneous poems, which contain specimens from most of our British bards." In the same year, sending him a Walker's Dictionary, she reminds him of "those authors you possess—Blair, Addison, Mason, Young." In 1821 Taylor saw in his cupboard copies of Burns, Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Crabbe. And in a printed letter of 1826, addressed to Montgomery, Clare says that he has "long had a fondness for the poetry of the time of Elizabeth," which he knows from Ellis's "Specimens of Early English Poets" and Ritson's "English Songs." It was doubtless in Ellis that he found some of the metres in which we may well be surprised to find him writing as early as 1821; Villon's ballad metre, for instance, which he uses in a poem in "The Village Minstrel," and which he might have found in poems of Henryson and other Scottish poets quoted in Ellis. Later on, among some poems which he wrote in deliberate imitation of Elizabethan poets, we shall find one in a Wyatt metre, which reads like an anticipation of Bridges.

Thus it cannot be said that in Clare's very earliest work we have an utterance which literary influences have not modified. The impulse and the subject-matter are alike his own, and are taken directly from what was about him. There is no closer attention to nature than in Clare's poems; but the observation begins by being literal; nature a part of his home, rather than his home a part of nature. The things about him are the whole of his material, he does not choose them by preference out of others equally available; all his poems are made out of the incidents and feelings of humble life and the actual fields and flowers of his particular part of England. He does not make pictures which would imply aloofness and selection; he enumerates, which means a friendly knowledge. It is enough for him, enough for his success in his own kind of poetry, to say them over, saying, "Such they were, and I loved them because I had always seen them so." He begins anywhere and stops anywhere. Some simple moralising, from



the fall of leaves to the fading of man, rounds a landscape or a sensation of autumn. His words are chosen only to be exact, and he does not know when he is obvious or original in his epithets. When he begins to count over aspects, one by one, as upon his fingers, saying them over because he loves them, not one more than another, setting them down by heart, with exactly their characteristics, his words have the real sound of what they render, and can be as oddly impressive as this :

And the little chumbling mouse  
Guards the dead weed for her house ;

or, in a poem on "The Wild-flower Nosegay," can make so eager and crowded a grouping of names :

Crimp-filled daisy, bright bronze buttercup,  
Freckt cowslip peeps, gilt whins of morning's dew,  
And hooded arum early sprouting up  
Ere the white thorn bud half unfolds to view,  
And wan-hued lady-smocks, that love to spring  
'Side the swamp margin of some plashy pond ;  
And all the blooms that early Aprils bring,  
With eager joy each filled my playful hand.

His danger is to be too deliberate, unconscious that there can be choice in descriptive poetry, or that anything which runs naturally into the metre may not be the best material for a particular poem. Thus his longer poems, like "The Village Minstrel," drop from poetry into realism, and might as well have been written in prose. He sets himself to write "Village Tales," perhaps to show that it was possible to write of village life, not as he said Crabbe did, "like a magistrate." He fails equally when he sets himself (perhaps in competition with Byron's famous and overrated "Dream") to elaborate an imaginary horror in the poem which he too calls "The Dream"; or, setting himself too deliberately to secure in verse the emphasis of an actual storm, loses all that poetry which comes to him naturally when he is content not to search for it.

To Clare childhood was the only time of happiness, and his complaint is that "Poesy hath its youth forgot." His feeling towards things was always that of a child, and as he lived so he wrote, by recollection. When, in "The Shepherd's Calendar," he writes the chronicle of the months, he writes best when he gives the child's mood rather than the grown-up person's, and always regrets that reason has come with years, because reason is disheartening. Yet still, as when he was a child, he is friends with all he sees, and he sometimes forgets that anything exists but birds, insects, and flowers. By this time he has a firmer hold on his material, and his lists turn now to pictures, as when he sees

Bees stroke their little legs across their wings,  
And venture short flights where the snowdrop hings  
Its silver bell, and winter aconite  
Its buttercup-like flowers that shut at night;

or looks up to where,

Far above, the solitary crane  
Wings lonely to unfrozen dykes again,  
Cranking a jarring, melancholy cry,  
Through the wild journey of the cheerless sky;

or, in May, sees in a quaint figure

The stooping lilies of the valley,  
That love with shades and dews to dally,  
And bending droop on slender threads,  
With broad hood-leaves above their heads,  
Like white-robed maids, in summer hours,  
Beneath umbrellas shunning showers.

His epithets strengthen and sharpen; earlier he would not have thought of speaking of "bright glib ice," or of the almanac's "wisdom gossiped from the stars." A new sense of appropriate melody has come into the verse, which has lost none of its definite substance, but which he now handles more delicately. One even realises that he has read Keats much more recently than Thomson.

Much of the verse contained in the last book published by Clare, "The Rural Muse," of 1835, appeared in annuals of the time, and would seem to have been written for them. He repeats all his familiar notes, with a fluency which long practice and much reading have given him, and what he gains in ease he loses in personal directness. Others besides himself might have written his meditation on the nightingale and on the eternity of time, and when he questions the skull on Cowper's Green we remember with more pleasure the time when he could write of the same locality as he really knew it. Here and there, as in the coloured fragment on "Insects," he is himself, and there are a few of the many sonnets which convey a sudden aspect of nature or comment aptly upon it. But it may be questioned whether the impression made on us by "The Rural Muse" is wholly the fault of Clare. Mr. Martin tells us that Messrs. Whittaker & Co., "fearful of risking money in printing too large a quantity of rural verse, so much out of fashion for the time, had picked those short pieces from about five times as many poems, furnished to the author." I have before me the original manuscript, in Clare's handwriting, from which his book was printed. It is written on 188 folio pages, often in double columns, in close handwriting, and contains, curiously enough, exactly 188 poems, though the average of length varies considerably. The choice made for publication may have been well calculated for the public of the day, though, as the book failed, perhaps it was not. A number of long tales in verse, some of the more trivial comic pieces, the poems written in series, like the "Pewit's," the "Pettichap's," the "Yellow Wagtail's," the "Yellowhammer's," and yet other birds' nests, were left out with little or no loss; but some of the rollicking and some of the quieter poems are more personal than anything in the published book, though a little rough and unfinished, and there is a curious and really simple and charming piece of autobiography called "The Progress of Rhyme," from which I must quote a few lines:

I felt that I'd a right to song,  
 And sung—but in a timid strain  
 Of fondness for my native plain ;  
 For everything I felt a love,  
 The weeds below, the birds above ;  
 And weeds that bloomed in summer's hours  
 I thought they should be reckoned flowers ;  
 They made a garden free for all,  
 And so I loved them, great and small,  
 And sung of some that pleased my eye,  
 Nor could I pass the thistle by,  
 But paused, and thought it could not be  
 A weed in Nature's poesy.

There are more good sonnets among the unprinted than among the printed ones, and here is one of the best :

#### THE INSTINCT OF HOPE

Is there another world for this frail dust  
 To warm with life and be itself again ?  
 Something about me daily speaks there must,  
 And why should instinct nourish hopes in vain ?  
 'Tis Nature's prophecy that such will be,  
 And everything seems struggling to explain  
 The close-sealed volume of its mystery.  
 Time, wandering onward, keeps its usual pace,  
 As seeming anxious of eternity,  
 To meet that calm and find a resting-place ;  
 E'en the small violet feels a future power,  
 And waits each year renewing blooms to bring ;  
 And surely man is no inferior flower  
 To die unworthy of a second spring ?

From 1835, the date of "The Rural Muse," no more of Clare's poems were published until, in the year 1873, Mr. J. L. Cherry brought out at Northampton his very interesting "Life and Remains of John Clare," in which he published for the first time a selection from "the manuscripts of more than 500 poems," written by Clare in the asylum, together with others of an earlier date, scattered in various magazines and annuals. Mr. Cherry tells us that of the asylum poems, "scarcely one was found in a state in which it could be submitted to the

public without more or less of revision and correction." As I am anxious to restore the original texts of such of these poems as I shall include in a selection from Clare's poems which I have in preparation, I am most desirous of seeing these manuscripts. So far, notwithstanding the kind help of Mr. Cherry himself, of the asylum authorities, and of others who have interested themselves in the matter, I have not been able to trace them. If anyone who reads this can tell me of their whereabouts, or help me to a sight of them, I shall be deeply grateful.

And the more so as it is in these poems, for the first time, that Clare's lyrical faculty gets free. Strangely enough, a new joy comes into the verse, as if at last he is at rest. He seems to accept nature now more easily, because his mind is in a kind of oblivion of everything else; madness being, as it were, his security. He writes love songs that have an airy fancy, a liquid and thrilling note of song. They are mostly exultations of memory, which goes from Mary to Patty, and thence to a gipsy girl and to vague Isabellas and Scotch maids. In some of them the hallucination is evident, but it makes a better poetry. A new feeling for children comes in, sometimes in songs of childish humour, like "Little Trotty Wagtail" or "Clock-a-Clay," made out of bright, laughing sound; and once in a lovely poem, one of the most nearly perfect he ever wrote, called "The Dying Child," which reminds one of beautiful things that have been done since, but of nothing done earlier. As it is little known, I will quote it.

## THE DYING CHILD.

He could not die when trees were green,  
For he loved the time too well.  
His little hands, when flowers were seen,  
Were held for the bluebell,  
As he was carried o'er the green.  
His eyes glanced at the white wood-nosed bee;  
He knew those children of the Spring:  
When he was well and on the lea  
He held one in his hands to sing,  
Which filled his heart with glee.

Infants, the children of the Spring !  
 How can an infant die  
 When butterflies are on the wing,  
 Green grass, and such a sky ?  
 How can they die in Spring ?

He held his hands for daisies white,  
 And then for violets blue,  
 And took them all to bed at night  
 That in the green fields grew,  
 As childhood's sweet delight.

And then he shut his little eyes,  
 And flowers would notice not ;  
 Birds' nests and eggs caused no surprise,  
 He now no blossoms got ;  
 They met with plaintive sighs.

When Winter came and blasts did sigh,  
 And bare were plain and tree,  
 As he for ease in bed did lie  
 His soul seemed with the free,  
 He died so quietly.

It is only rarely, in this new contentment, this solitude  
 even from himself, that recollection returns. Then he  
 remembers

I am a sad lonely hind :  
 Trees tell me so, day after day,  
 As slowly they wave in the wind.

And it is in one of these remembering moods that he writes,

I am ! Yet what I am who cares or knows ?

in what is perhaps his last poem, a poem which has found its  
 way into anthologies and become almost famous.

ARTHUR SYMONS.



## THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MR. HALDANE'S ARMY BILL

**O**F all the numerous Bills dealing with the British Army system which have, during the last few years, received the approbation or the condemnation of public opinion, and which have, after a brief (sometimes too brief) trial, been consigned to the limbo of the past, it is possible that none has been received under more favourable auspices or with a more general chorus of welcome than that which Mr. Haldane is now engaged in engineering through Parliament. It is not difficult to discover solid reasons for these all but unanimous expressions of good will and pleasure. Amongst the Conservatives, or at least amongst the more forward section of that party, the fear that the natural reaction which inevitably occurs after any party has held undisputed sway over the country for many years, might drive the new Government to adopt a line of conduct diametrically opposed in all its branches to that of the late Ministry, was a very real and insistent fear, and, at one time, appeared to be fully justified by the utterances of some of the leading lights of the Liberal party. This advanced section of the Conservative party was well aware that, even on their own side of the House, approval of the successive army schemes which their leaders had brought forward was far from being general. Among their opponents they knew well that

a strong feeling was growing up which advocated a drastic change in the military policy of the country. Consequently their relief was proportionately great when they saw in the new scheme no endeavour to shirk the imperial responsibilities on which they had themselves so often insisted. The more old-fashioned Conservatives also, those who, if the word can still be said to delineate any political party of the present day, might perhaps be most fitly designated as Tories, felt a perhaps natural satisfaction that their political enemies should have been forced to turn to them, the Parliamentary representatives of the territorial magnates of the country, in order to secure the success of the scheme for a National Army.

It would be idle to pretend that the opinions of all the numerous parties which go to make up the great force that musters under the pennon of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, are entirely in favour of the proposals of his War Minister. It would, in fact, be almost a sheer impossibility to suggest any one single subject now before the British electorate on which the whole of such a motley throng could be relied upon to express a single decision. While, however, complete unanimity cannot be looked for or expected in a force composed of such diverse elements, there can be no doubt that the vast majority of the Liberal Party are well satisfied to find that Mr. Haldane's ingenuity and application has produced a Bill which is, in its main characteristics, in entire accord with the best traditions of Liberal statesmanship. The formation of the present Liberal Party is of very recent date, and can only be said to have begun with the close of the last South African war. In the same manner as, when the late Mr. Gladstone, reversing his original opinion of those who, in his own words, were "marching through rapine and murder to the dismemberment of the Empire," decided to hand over to those politicians the government of Ireland, did many otherwise stalwart Liberals recoil from the duty which their chief would have forced upon them, so, when the present leader of the Government talked glibly of "hecatombs of slaughtered babes," did many honourable

men of pronounced Liberal opinions hesitate, in a time of national emergency, to join the ranks of a party which unhappily countenanced such wild statements. With the close of hostilities however and with the governmental opinions on the question of Home Rule for Ireland left in a delightfully vague condition, the great Liberal party is rapidly resuming the importance and the respectability which it possessed previous to its disruption at the hands of Mr. Gladstone. Supporters of the policy of the late Government should not, however, consider the improvement in the calibre among the rank and file of the party of their opponents as an unmixed evil. It is certainly pleasant to see one's political friends in a great majority, it is certainly annoying when people, whose integrity and ability would render them valuable assistants, decline to look upon all objects from exactly the same point of view as ourselves; but the safety of a country cannot but be in danger when such an enormous majority of those possessing a real stake in the country are forced to band themselves together under one political flag as was the case in 1886. Such a state of affairs naturally throws the opposing faction into the hands of their most extreme supporters, supporters who, in the case of the Liberal party, favour a policy dangerously approaching that of Socialism or spoliation. Consequently the return of many of these wanderers to the Liberal fold, while it has given Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman such an overwhelming superiority over a somewhat dispirited Opposition, has yet achieved the important result of affording powerful support to the Ministers of their party when the extreme section thereof would desire to force their leaders to accept dictation from their followers.

It is therefore on the support of this phalanx of Moderates that Mr. Haldane has been able so confidently to rely for the successful passing of his Bill and for the keeping at bay of the Nationalist, Labour, and Socialist sections of his leader's party. The attitude of the Nationalists towards the British Army has, to do them justice, never been concealed, and may be easily

discovered by a brief perusal of the pamphlets issued by the political organisations which return the Irish Members to Parliament. The Labourites and Socialists also have always placed the regular soldier in the same category as that of the drone, and, as these parties when combined would be able to poll nearly one hundred and thirty votes, it is not difficult to see what would have been the fate of such a statesmanlike effort as Mr. Haldane's had he not been so fortunate as to be supported by a powerful body of Liberals of the old school.

Numerous reasons may be adduced for the loyal attitude towards their War Minister adopted by these Moderates. Perhaps the most influential of them all was the certainty that the new proposals would, if agreed to, result in a very considerable reduction in the size of the Army Estimates. It could not escape the notice of Liberal Members that the great bulk of their supporters at the last General Election had become sorely disappointed at the total failure of the Government to redeem the pledges which they had scattered broadcast in order to secure their return to office. Here, however, was an excellent opportunity of proving to their constituents the sincerity of their frequently expressed protestations that a mandate from the country would be followed by far-reaching economies at the War Office. They were strongly influenced also by another consideration. It is as stupid as it is wrong for Conservatives to imagine that they alone hold the monopoly for patriotism, self-sacrifice, and pride of empire. Undoubtedly there are many members of the Liberal party who would like to see England relieved of the burden of imperial responsibilities; undoubtedly at least one member of the Cabinet has publicly expressed opinions on the British Army of which he is now probably heartily ashamed. It can, indeed, be no pleasant recollection for any man of integrity that he was once so foolish as to allude to a large class of honourable servants of the Crown as "gilded popinjays," to express an ardent desire to indulge in a bout of fisticuffs with any one of them, and then, when a representative of this class, a man no longer young, who had

already in the execution of his duty received a severe bullet-wound, had offered to accommodate him with the desired pugilistic encounter, to reflect that he failed to seize this opportunity of vindicating, at least, his reputation for personal courage. The great bulk, however, of the Liberal party are just as solicitous of the safety of the Empire and the honour of their country as are their political foes, and they were therefore prepared to give a warm welcome to any scheme which tended to place our military forces in a sound position. Such a position they have conceived that the new Bill will provide for and this in itself would have been sufficient reason to enlist their enthusiastic support. Yet another cause for self-congratulation is, in the opinion of the Liberal rank and file, to be discovered in this all-satisfying measure. When in Opposition they had protested vigorously against any suspicious word which might possibly be twisted into conveying a wish for compulsory service. Consequently they hailed Mr. Haldane's remark, that the present Bill was designed to "dig earth-works" against the advancement of any such scheme, with shouts of pure joy. The thought that it had been left to a Liberal Minister to make the first move towards invoking the assistance of the country in the formation of a National Army undoubtedly would very rightly give them a sensation of pride and responsibility in the work of their leader. They were secure from the reproaches of both friend and foe. An honest endeavour had been made to reduce existing estimates, and, at the same time, to maintain efficiency. It could not even be urged against them that their Bill was framed in a partisan spirit, inasmuch as, in the great majority of cases, it was a moral certainty that the future management of the new Territorial Army must be vested in their political opponents, should the scheme of county control be given a fair chance of proving its value.

It may be a matter of wonder therefore that the new Bill has not been more enthusiastically received by the country at large. Certainly, lukewarm praise is the most that can be said to

have heralded its arrival. The natural reason for this coldness is not hard to discover. The country is divided into two extremely hostile camps, Conservative and Radical. Of late years adhesion to the Conservative cause has practically only been open to those who are prepared to accept as the keystone of their political faith, the necessity of a voluntary hired army vastly exceeding in number (and therefore in expense) that provided for in Mr. Haldane's estimates, or, as an alternative, a system of national compulsory service in order to provide the country with a home army of conscripts. Now the rank and file of the Conservative party cannot be expected to see as clearly as their representatives in Parliament the, to their mind, deplorable number of desertions from their code of faith, the consequent futility of resistance to the will of their immensely powerful enemy, and the very great danger of irritating him, by useless opposition, into listening more kindly to the clamour of those who press for yet further reductions in the army. Consequently the Conservative papers throughout the country have teemed with letters and articles pointing out the various crimes of which the War Minister has been guilty and insisting on alterations and extensions which would entail further expenditure. With some of these letter-writers it is impossible not to feel sympathy, for the objects which they would press upon the public are, to them, of the very last importance to the country and the Empire, but there can surely be but one opinion regarding the unwisdom of urging on these views at the present moment. In exactly the same way do the majority of the Radical periodicals raise their voices against the adoption of any policy which savours, however remotely, of moderation. The many weary years which have been spent by their party in Opposition have embittered the disciples of their cause and rendered them only too willing to listen to the parrot cry of "Down with Everything" which is so frequently the burden of speeches delivered by political orators of the Socialistic type. There are also certain of the



leaders of their party who cannot be excused from having given vent to utterances which were, to say the least, seriously misleading. The principle of *væ victis* which figured so prominently in some of the speeches of the Premier were misinterpreted by many of his followers so as to apply to a complete reversal of the imperial policy instead of to the devout expression of an intention to despoil those who had supported the other side. Naturally, therefore, many supporters of the Government suffered serious annoyance when they found that in spite of the great triumph at the polls the world still went on much as usual, that our fleets were not put up to auction to be knocked down to the highest bidder, that taxation remained very much as it did before, and that there was but little sign of the weapons of the British Army being altered into agricultural implements. It cannot, therefore, be any longer a matter for surprise that extremists of both parties view Mr. Haldane's Bill with dissatisfaction. The Bill is in fact, in spite of its apparently sweeping changes, very much in the nature of a compromise, and is therefore bound, if it is a fair compromise, to be received with rather mixed feelings by both sides.

To many observers, however, the chief danger to the Bill may be expected to come, not from its enemies but from its own inherent weaknesses. It is the very thoroughness of the Bill which causes the greatest anxiety to its friends. It is easy enough, by a few strokes of the pen, to completely abolish the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers. It is equally easy to decree the formation of a Territorial Army. What is not so easy—what is, in fact, an absolute impossibility—is to eliminate the basis of speculation on which this Bill has been based. It is all very well to hope that this Territorial Army will find its ranks filled to overflowing by 300,000 men representing in every way the pick of the nation. It is probable that it is the sincere wish of the major part of both political factions that such a happy state of affairs may come to pass. Sincere good wishes do not, however, create armies,

and it cannot be denied that, when it comes to a question of speculation, the speculation of the pessimist appears to have at least as much of solid common sense behind it as has the speculation of that cheery optimist, Mr. Haldane.

To begin with, Mr. Haldane hardly seems to have sufficiently weighed the very important point of the various social classes which are tapped by our existing auxiliary forces. He appears to have produced his Bill on the understanding that the average militiaman will find himself just as much at home in the ranks of a crack Volunteer battalion, say the Civil Service Rifles, as a man of that corps would in an equally efficient Militia battalion. It is difficult to say what reasons can have been produced to cause Mr. Haldane to so confidently expect such a desirable state of affairs. Certainly the social difference between the rank and file of some country Volunteer battalions and the Militia battalions to which they are affiliated, is not so great as it is in the case of urban corps, but still even there it exists to an extent which Mr. Haldane can surely not have quite realised. Although it was long before his time, and although there can hardly be any auxiliary officers now serving who can remember such a state of transition, the writer well recollects having been told by old Militia officers that it was the formation of the Volunteer Force which struck the first and deadliest blow at the strength and efficiency of the Militia. Up to that time, the Militia had provided the sole means of which the business man who had an inborn fondness for soldiering could avail himself during his yearly holiday, for at that time the Yeomanry corps were reserved practically exclusively for those whose circumstances permitted them the ownership of a horse. Even at this period the majority of militiamen seem to have been drawn from the class they at present recruit from, but the leaven of those enthusiasts who joined for the sake of a cheap holiday on the lines they most preferred, is said to have been very considerable, and to have had the best possible effect upon the whole force. With the formation of Volunteer battalions, these men drifted naturally

into the new force, where they found more congenial surroundings, where they had greater liberty (especially in the matter of the rifle shooting in which they were so much interested), and where the shorter period of the annual camp was found by them to be more convenient than was the month demanded by the Militia authorities.

Denuded of the valuable support of these "amateur" militiamen, as they may perhaps be styled, the force was made to entirely depend upon the "professional" militiaman, a man who was attracted by the pay, by the rations, and by the bounties with which rich colonels sought to maintain the strengths of their battalions. The struggle for existence has now become so acute in these islands that no man who can get regular work can afford to risk losing it by insisting on a month's holiday, which is generally far more than the average employer is in a position to concede. Consequently, the militiaman of the present day is a man who relies mainly on casual jobs for his livelihood. It is for this reason that longer trainings, with the periods judiciously selected to suit the particular districts, will probably have no ill effect on the recruiting for the force. In the Midlands, in the mining districts, where work is plentiful during the winter, it is obvious that summer is the most suitable time for calling out the Militia, while in agricultural districts winter is the slackest time of the year from the employees' point of view. These men, then, who constitute practically the whole of the rank and file of the force, are attracted almost entirely by financial considerations, so much so that, at one time, it was computed that quite twenty thousand men of the force were enlisted in more than one battalion. It has happened more than once to the writer, and probably at one time or another to most officers who have served any length of time in the Militia, that on the first day of the training, an old soldier has strenuously denied all knowledge of the name in which he had enlisted in your battalion, the poor fellow having got mixed in his names by many changes in many corps during the intervening eleven months, and imagining that you

have laid a deep trap wherein to catch him. Now it seems hardly likely that many of these men will take the trouble to join the new Territorial Army if, as Mr. Haldane has intimated, the force is to be raised on the lines of a Volunteer army, and merely paid out-of-pocket expenses, instead of on that of a hired army wherein the labour entailed is paid for in hard cash. One colonel of Militia is reported to have said that not more than fifty per cent. of his men are likely to accept service in the new army, and it is extremely likely that even this estimate is too rose-coloured, and that 25,000 men is the very utmost that may be expected to change service with the disbanding of the Militia. Should this unfortunately be the case, the loss to the country will be very serious in more ways than one. The militiaman may be, and often is, an exceedingly rough diamond, but the force to which he belongs constitutes, in the opinion of many, the very best fighting material in the country. The physique of the force, especially in soundness and chest measurement, is really extremely good, far better in most cases than it is in the Regulars. It is largely the weediness of the boy recruits which spoil the paper returns of the physical condition of Militia battalions. An enormous proportion of these lads, however, are almost immediately pushed (depôt sergeants are adepts at this) into the line, and the real strength of the Militia rests on the large number of ex-soldiers and broken men who drift into its ranks, nearly all of them men in the prime of life. To these the abolishment of the Militia will be a very serious matter. They have looked to their battalion for years to provide them with a home when opportunities for work are few and far between, and to furnish them at the end of the training with a couple of extremely useful sovereigns wherewith to tide over any bad times that may lie ahead. Not only, therefore, does the country stand the chance of losing some most excellent fighting stuff, but there is a very great probability that what will be a relief to the Army Estimates will be a considerable addition to local rates. There is no immediate prospect of an improvement in

trade, twelve millions of our inhabitants are (presumably) still wobbling on "the verge of starvation," and therefore it would appear as if the ex-militiaman must inevitably seek refuge in the local workhouse, leaving the hapless ratepayers to provide him with food and lodging, and to cogitate on the simultaneous increase in the rates and the disappearance of a fine force.

The Volunteer also, however much flattered and pleased by the serious consideration for which he has so long asked, and with which Mr. Haldane has now supplied him, may be expected to view the new condition of service with some apprehension. A Volunteer is usually in a position where strict attention to his business or to his employer's business is an absolute essential if he desires to succeed, or even to keep his place, in the fierce struggle for existence which is now the case in almost every phase of commercial life. Such a man, while remaining very willing to devote the whole of his spare time towards rendering himself fit to bear arms in the defence of his country, cannot afford to ignore what his unfortunate position would be should he be called out for six months' training in case of war. To be mobilised in order to combat an enemy which has actually made its appearance in the country is one thing; to be asked to acknowledge, on enlistment, one's liability to be embodied and drilled for six months at a stretch, merely because a hostile army is rumoured to be about to invade the country, is quite another; and the responsible class which forms the best, as it does the largest, part of the Volunteer Force, may very likely find itself prevented by business considerations from coming forward as it has done hitherto.

Should such a pessimistic view of the possible condition of the new Territorial Army prove to be a correct one, it must be admitted that Mr. Haldane's position will not be an enviable one. He will then be in the awkward fix of having done away with ninety thousand of the best trained of his auxiliaries, of having failed to get the well-knit army of three hundred

thousand men for which he is hoping, and of being left with a reduced Regular Army which, although it may be numerous enough to provide garrisons, depôts, and an expeditionary force, cannot possibly also provide us with a home army as well. In such an unfortunate state of affairs as the above, Mr. Haldane will find that his new Bill, so far from having thrown up earthworks against conscription, has simply dug a pit for the opponents of compulsory service to fall into, for the terribly exposed position of the country, with absolutely no force of armed men at all behind its hired army of Regulars, will be so clearly demonstrated that some form of military service is almost sure to be insisted on.

Even should failure be his portion, however, Mr. Haldane will have undoubtedly deserved well of his country, for he has made an honest attempt to shake himself free from party politics, and to enlist the sympathies of all interested in Army Reform; and, if his scheme does come to nothing, he will be entitled to claim that its defeat will be entirely owing to a lack of that patriotism on which he has so greatly and properly relied.

CARDIGAN.



## THE AMERICAN TRAMP

**I**T was that most magical hour of a long summer's day, when all the voices of the Great Plains are hushed in a magniloquent silence, as I walked up to the huge railway-tank four miles from Calgary, and flung myself down in its narrow westward shadow. The chinook wind was playing one of his timeless barbaric melodies in the harp of telegraph wires hung overhead: Nicotina's little fantastical smoke-elves tripped to the tune about their altar-fire (unkindled since breakfast-time) and anon floated off on the ground-swell of the air into the hither sunlight; and the virginal thoughts of that poor Undine, imprisoned in the tall iron reservoir behind me, made the shadow as dulcet-cool as the mountain source of her nameless river. The dreary sense of time, the weary sense of space, soon ceased to vex; soon I lay between sleeping and waking, with half-closed eyes fixed on the diamond point of a single snow-clad sun-lit peak far above and far behind the bank of clouds which veiled the Rockies; and, if in the end—as I believe it to have happened—I stopped pulling at my pipe, no wonder he thought I was asleep.

For I had not spent many heart's beats in that resting-place of heart's ease, when all my outlook on the world was filled with the apparition of a horrible, ridiculous head. An untrimmed fringe of grey beard, a wide mouth full of broken teeth, a long loose upper lip, a short stiff snub-nose, a pair of

beady eyes set close together, a bald pate shaped like the small end of an egg and tilted backward at the simian angle—such were the details of a physiognomy, which, however, might yet have been that of Socrates distorted in the eye of his dullest critic. For the moment I could but ask myself, where and when—if anywhere at any time—I had seen so strange a mask; and indeed, it was not until I observed his grin of infantile malevolence, the hieroglyphic of some naughty purpose, and felt the air warm with his eager breathing, that I began to take thought for myself. Presently a hand was softly laid on my heart or thereabouts and as softly withdrawn; next the top buttons of my coat were discreetly unfastened; and, finally, the hand crawled cautiously on its finger-tips into the deep inner pocket where I kept my papers. The moment I heard them crackle in his grasp, I flung my left arm across my body and with my right hand grasped the intruding wrist. Then, jerking myself into a sitting posture, I grasped my stick and began to take stock of the would-be thief, who for his part made not the slightest effort to escape.

Never before or since have I clapped my eyes upon so grotesque a specimen of the "hobo" or tramp of the new world. He had the narrow-ridged breast of a young pullet, the tapering throat and sloping shoulders of an oil-flask, the hairy, attenuated limbs peculiar to certain spiders; yet in the midst of such a set of misbegotten and dwindled members lay at ease or moved at leisure a monstrous stomach. The thought incarnate of some master-mason of the Middle Ages—good old Father Gluttony come down from his cloister wall and walking in the flesh—a mere human bag conscious of nothing save his own vacuity: such was my first misconception of the man and such, likely enough, had been yours! And it was not until I came to hear his own interpretation of himself that I found a better way of taking him and admired with understanding certain subtleties of his anatomy—for one instance, the surprising length and stealthy alacrity of his

great toes, and for another, the quaint patch of bluish-purple skin in the crook of his left elbow—which were the outward signs of inward things to be spoken of hereafter.

No doubt it was a consideration of his rags which set me thinking my second thoughts. Though these had hardly served to hide the nakedness of a scarecrow, his manner of wearing them conveyed a very definite but altogether indefinable impression of blackguard smartness. Here was, in fact, the Beau Brummel of his squalid world of tatterdemalions; herein was seen the *bel air* of the selectest purlieus of his Bohemia. Though I cannot describe his wardrobe (scanty as it was the rag-bags of a continent must have been ransacked to match it), I can give reasonable grounds for saying he was as exquisitely dressed as any dandy of them all. For—*ex pede Herculem*—let us consider his far-fetched boots. Plainly he had been laving his feet that morning in the dusty puddle under the dangling length of hose, and was drying them in the tintillating rays of the sun when my advent drove him into ambush. His footgear lay with the soles up just beyond the north-western side of the Tank, so that subsequently I had a good sight of them. The one was a huge clog of wrinkled raw-hide such as is worn by workers in the slippery drifts of Sierra Nevada rock mines; the other was a decrepit affair of patent leather with elastic sides and a long pointed toe such as may be seen every second of the lunch hour on a New York side-walk. It follows, therefore, that the fellow had travelled from the Atlantic to the Pacific to find footgear to his mind—after which the longest expedition of history's dandies in search of gloves or waist-coating sound, however told, the cheapest of cheap trips.

Leaning back against the smooth cool wall behind me so as to focus him, I must have twitched the poor devil's puny wrist.

"Look a-here, boss!" he croaked out, "don't be scrouding a poor man's wrist all to jam! Why I ain't got no gun nor knife, ner I ain't no fightin' man, and if I'd ever a thought, o'

skinning out, my bit of a stomach 'ud say 'nop.' If it's a deader<sup>1</sup> in the pen<sup>2</sup> I'm here!"

"Very well," said I, leaving my hold, "but don't you move or"—— The rest was a flourish of the stick.

"I sees it, boss, I sees it!" he said, chafing his wrist, "and I'm wantin' no timber lesson this morning. . . . I beg an' beseech you, kin' gentleman, to remember a poor man wiv——"

"Drop that cant!" I rapped out. His teeth snapped together, and, swallowing the tail of the sentence, he sat quiescent in a quiver.

"I see we shall get on well together," I proceeded, "and as the sun seems too much interested in our proceedings, and you are not wearing a hat, I think we'll walk round to the north side. As I am in a sense your guest, you shall lead the way. Git up!"

Accordingly we retired ceremoniously into the northern shadow, where was a wealth of tall grasses and the blood-red spire of the prairie-rose. He would have sat down on the tail of my eye as it were (within arm's length of his boots), but I made him sit opposite me. 'Then I fell to asking him questions, which he answered fluently enough.

Knowing that the great ignoble army of hoboes and crooks have no regular camping places above the boundary line—Canada being a cold and lonesome pitch, and Canadians by no means warm in welcoming such gentry—I began by asking him how he came to be on the high prairies.

"Now I'll tell the truth, Judge," he cheerily replied. "It was news of the Lardo diggins as brought me and many o' my maties up here. I catch a scrap of Canuck news-sheet down East as told me miners was pulling out by the carload from the West States, and I guessed I'd be along wiv 'em. So I beat my way to Winnipeg, and there I stay three days in a 'Tag's Home,'<sup>3</sup> free lodgin', snap<sup>4</sup> when I had a pain. Gosh! a great house, and I groan that bad they spen' the best part

<sup>1</sup> A life sentence.

Penitentiary; too long a word for general use.

<sup>2</sup> Immigrant's shed.

<sup>4</sup> Brandy.

of a bottle on me till they call in the Doc. and Doc. he fire me out. Then West by the C.P.R.—a mean low-down road for a man to travel on his face. Not a breakie that knew me and was hearty. I had to travel on the trucks, for every time I tried the roof the ole man<sup>1</sup> had me fired off. I'll be glad to see the Pigs<sup>2</sup> again, seein' that among friends I'm the Chicago Fatty, and well known as a king of hobo men."

The vanity of the creature—proud of what he was, prouder still of what he was not—was manifest. I assumed an innocent look and asked him if he found work in the Lardo mines.

"Me work!" he cried, with the magniloquence of Aristides accused of stealing an obol—"Me work! The gumps alive! No, Sir! The Fatty's no half-way beggar! If you on'y knew, they'd haul down the stars an' stripes"—pointing towards the Tank—"over there if they heard I'd been askin' work on a dirty little rock-mine up here. No, Sir! I come in to pick up the pickins. There's never no timber-lessons<sup>3</sup> in a mining camp an' the boys is free wi' broken wittles, an' when they're loaded up wi' tangleleg<sup>4</sup> a poor man has a shin-plaster for a grin. That was not '49 by a belly-full, but I done none so bad. Here's six dollars in my pants, which I ain't worked for neither wiv my ten fingers nor wiv my ten toes."

Then and not till then did I notice his great toes, which were worth as much to him as an extra pair of thumbs and perhaps more. When he was speaking deliberately, the one would rub against the other caressingly; when he talked vehemently, they moved to and fro and backwards or forwards with incredible celerity. Twice also that forenoon, when a mosquito had settled on his shank, I saw him lift his lean furtive foot curved inwardly and not only crush the insect but also gently soothe the tiny wound with a long, meditative great toe.

<sup>1</sup> The conductor.      <sup>2</sup> Chicago, generally, but sometimes Cincinnati.

<sup>3</sup> Thwackings. Such lessons are common enough in the South, where niggers generally execute them.

<sup>4</sup> Red-eye whiskey.

I take this thumb-like toe to be the hall-mark of the hobo of genius. It is no physical sign of a psychical lapse, no bodily hint of the soul's hankering after the old arboreal life, no mere footnote to the Darwinian hypothesis; rather it is the fine flower of the individual's experience, the peculiar and personal issue of a myriad experiments, the sum total of the talent and usurer's interest thereon over a lifetime. The singer's voice, the actor's gesture, the painter's brush, the poet's pen—add to these the hobo's great toe. Nature having flung my friend together in somewhat of a hurry, had given him but loose ramshackle joints. Necessity, the mother, and patience, the foster-mother, of all invention, had enabled him to turn her carelessness to a good account. For at all times and in all places your free companion of the road would fain to be scratching himself—it is the most ancient form of introspection—and even the English tramp, who pads it at his ease on the King's highway, would doubtless find it mighty convenient to be able to reach his legs without even bending his back. But the American hobo, who beats his way about a more spacious world and has no time to walk, must learn to use my friend's peculiar art or die before his time of a myriad stings of consciousness; for whether he rides clinging to the trucks of a car or balanced at full length on the curved roof thereof, Death is ever his fellow-passenger, and for ever watching to catch him at loose holds for a moment.

"Six dollars are a sum of money," I said after a while, "and if you will tell me how you mean to use it then . . . then I will let you keep it. If not"—and a flourish of the stick closed the sentence.

He considered my face for half a second, and then—"Have you seen the registry?" he asked with an air of mystery.

"The Registry?" I repeated, mystified.

"What we calls the registry," he explained—"seein' that this place is an hotel wiv a saloon for we 'uns. Take a squint back behin', Sir, an' you'll see it, may be."



I arose, and walking behind him, I looked up at the side of the Tank. At first I could see nothing save two or three patches of reddish rust, where the paint had peeled off; so soon, however, as my eyes became used to the change of light—for I was now standing in the sun-glare—I saw that the whole length of the wall as high and as low as a man can reach was scribbled over with chalk marks and scratches—sentences, words, letters, and meaningless signs. In a corner to themselves I at last discerned a collection of single letters surrounded by triangles, squares, lozenges, and so forth. In particular, there was a large F, with a half-circle about its head; and around four or five of the other symbols complete circles had been drawn.

"You've found the needle," said Fatty, following my gaze; "and now what d'ye make of it?"

"I can't read a line of the thing," I replied.

"For six dollars," said he, "I will read it truly."

"If so, you shall keep your money."

"The big F with a hat on's head," he explained, pointing with a crooked forefinger, "is my own little mark. I wrote it comin' out West, and all that ha' come out a'ter me on this road will study it an' know that I ain't yet skipped East. But 'fore I do start East—this very evenin'—I'll finish the round; when all frien's comin' this way will know I'm gone. An' watch them marks wiv a round about 'em! They, bein' frien's of mine, will guess thereby as they come along that I'm asking 'em to a spree at home; an' they will look at all the regishries from here to Chicago so's to keep in my track. Most all roads run through Chicago, and I never hear tell of hobo or crook who lef' the West wi'out seein' the Pigs. Sooner or later sure as sure we six'll rush the growler together<sup>1</sup>—a dollar o' fliff<sup>2</sup> to each boy! Gopher Tom—that T in the triangle's his mark—will be there; he's a sight older'n me, and is a man who knows. Ole Looker—the L in the square's hisself, will be along; he, when I saw him last,

<sup>1</sup> To drink in company.

<sup>2</sup> Beer.

was rustling on the crook, an' before that was a fawny,<sup>1</sup> and I ain't set eyes on him this four years. The other three marks is young men, but'll not be so raw when they've met us. We write our marks in a corner 'cause a many brakies know the regishry, an' times an' times'll rub it out just to vex we 'uns—for a many breakies were half-way beggars or even hobo men one day!"

I felt that an apology was necessary. "I am not the man," I said, with some feeling, "to break up a gentleman's party. Keep your money and—as there seems to be a heart in your carcass—you shall have a pull at my flask." And I proffered it with a bow not altogether ironical.

He took a dram, and then pulled out a paper of scraps and began to eat in a hurry. As soon as he had finished I resumed my seat, and we drank together like old friends. The liquor made him talkative, and he told me much about himself and his manner of life. A merry, harmless soul I should have said, and yet—whence and why the twinge of distrust, which set me gripping my stick every moment I looked at him? For a time he prattled and then, as I remember, began to preach his gospel in a big ranting voice.

"They raise a terrible gabble," he cried, "about Freedom nowadays, wheresoever I beat my way, but 'ceptin' myself and a friend or two, I never seen a free man. You an' such-like that snips out lives into jobs and sits listening on the city-clocks croakin' an' crankin'—what sort of a blamed show d'ye get to be free? 'Work and pray!' I hear a preacher say at camp-meetin' way back in the Dakotas—'work an' pray, if ye want to live free an' die happy!' A little bloat of a man he was, an' good for no kind o' rustling, I could see plain, an' couldn't even pray wi'out losing his temper. I'd a mind to pull him down from his tub, on'y there was a crowd o' tough-looking brethren around, nursin' likely lookin' clubs same as you. I never worked, an' never will; yet here I be alive an' happy an' free an' six dollars in my pants. How would he explain that, now?"

<sup>1</sup> Pedlar of bogus jewellery.

Anybody could have explained it, and so did I—but without a tub-preacher's twang of conviction.

"Very well, Minister!" he replied, "if all you 'uns are bendin' your back like jack-knives all day long just to keep we 'uns in wittles an' drink an' pants an' pocket-money, I'll say no more, though it ain't done as well as my pa did it."

"Cur'ous it is," dropping his sarcasm; "never I done a scratch o' work, but I was led on an' on an' to do more till I brought up in jail. One cold day last Fall it came into the back o' my head to clout my shoes—which I did right away, an' lost more'n you'd think. First I'd to rustle around to find a scrap o' leather and a needle and a flick o' twine; and then, not being handy at such-like jobs, I lost a mornin' fixin' up the thing, while the boys I was in with were snoozing in the sun. Nex' day I an' my best chum an' his kid—he'd a kid to beg for him—pulled out for the coast, and every stoppin' place the kid starts in chaffin' me an' callin' out: 'Cobbler-man, Cobbler-man!' It all come to a scrapping-hitch<sup>1</sup> afore we was through the mountains, and he being a Britisher born, put up his hans so that I could hit him a kick wiv my knee-bone. That laid him out fine an' good, but all same I was 'bliged to quit followin' the sun an' go back to Chicago for fear of my chummy, who'd an ugly clutch to him, and 'ud surely ha' gotten me, while sleepin', sooner or later. Paddin' the side-walks there the shoe looks wholesome as if bought an' paid for, I thinks, and too dandy, thinks I, for my ole pants. So wi'out studin', I try to hook a pair out of a Jew's door, an' the Jew smell me out, an' the screw<sup>2</sup> catch me just as I'm steppin' into the pa-a-nts, an' where be I? In the pen for a month o' fine weather!"

Here he must stop to rub his left arm, and for greater convenience he pulled up his sleeve; so that I got a fine view of that strange parti-coloured patch, to which I have already referred.

"How did you get hurt like that?" I asked.

<sup>1</sup> Rough-and-tumble fight.

<sup>2</sup> A policeman.

"The question's been put to me afore," he replied, caressing it, "but I won't deceive you. That's my old soldier. Many's the nickel he's put in my pants. He was made wiv' a warm horseshoe, when I took the road first, and I keep him alive an' hearty a many year, ticklin' him up iv'ry now an' then. The American people took consid'able stock in him, and the year my kid skinned out—for I'd a kid in those days to do my patter and set out my meals an' shoo the flies off—which yarn might ha' been somthin' concerning the flare-up of an oil-well, or the Apaches on a spree, or a fire in a sky-scraper or what-not. Whatsoever the American people most wanted to hear, they heard. Just as when Teddy Roosevelt speaks 'em a speech. But it was work, Sir, work keepin' him alive, and it hurt some; and it was more work waiting on the kid an' seeing he didn't eat or sleep too much, so I healed him up an' sent the boy home. Since when I done my chores myself."

Yet again he sat silent—hugging himself as before and smirking with half-shut eyes, and moving his lips like a babe remembering his last lollipop.

Presently he began to feel about for the flask, found it as quickly as though there had been eyes in his finger-tips, and drank it out in a breath. The effect of the draught was a kind of left-handed miracle. It was as though a devil had suddenly entered into possession of a corpse. His eye glittered at me like the point of a rapier; he clenched his fists and flung his legs apart: at last he laughed aloud—a tuneless, fleering laugh that brought the blood to my ears.

As soon as he could fetch his breath—"Where's the use," he cried in a black fury—"where's the use in preachin' to such a set o' pin-headed noodles? Let 'em dig till they've dug a grave. Let 'em squat in their office chairs till the wood grows into 'em—what's it matter to me an' mine? Trampin'—so the mean trash call my trade—is above and beyond 'em; for, whatever you may sit there an' think of it, to live as I live an be happy is a bigger bag o' tricks than paintin' picters or makin' songs or singin' 'em You there ain't a man that works

reg'lar day in day out (never mind how I read it), an' you don't live down a city rat-hole an' creep out once a year for a day's holiday—yet if you'll swear that you've never felt uneasy about the nex' job since you lef' the last I give you the stamps I scooped in the Lardo. What say?"

Having nothing to say, I said nothing, but merely nodded assent. He gave me back my nod and replaced the sheaf of bills with the air of a victorious gambler. The sting of the liquor had stirred in him a brief madness; but now that he was fulfilled, body and soul, with that noble fever of drunkenness, he could put away his quarrel with the world, and speak of things past, present, and to come with a certain solemn glee. Alas! if only the famous jar of Diogenes had held the body of wine instead of the spirit of wisdom, I think Alexander would have been treated with the courtesy he deserved.

"If God lives," he resumed, with a wave of the hand that might have been a benediction, "then God's truth is that the old hobo man wouldn't chop seats wiv a king, 'cepting, maybe, at meal-times. Aye, there's just one spot in this weary wide world that is easier to my mind than any go'den throne piled full o' silken cushions! Many, many times you seen it and yet you'd never, never guess!

"When I'm there I'm feeling that the sky above and the earth below, an' the far away waters are mine, an', better still, I know that myself b'longs to myself, and, best of all, that to-morrow's as much my own as to-day or my own pelt. An' there's another pointer, an' yet you'd never guess.

"There, if a man had a mind to work, he couldn't; and, if he could, he wouldn't for all the dust on the Coast. There a bit of breeze is al'ays blowin' fit to cool a man's temper, even when the lightnin' plays hide-an'-seek in the Foot-hills an' the air of the Plains curdles, and even a nigger has the brow-ache. It's a holy fright how you're frownin', but you'll never, never guess!

"*A-top of a car runnin' full speed through a summer night—that's the spot. Often I lay there an' look up an' do a pile*

o' thinkin'—mostly skeery thoughts, that don't seem to fit into words. I seen a many cur'ous sights up there. If so be the train slip round a kink in the line, the sky'll turn swift as the Missouri in a bend o' the bank at Helena, an' the stars dart away like a school o' gold-eye, an' the moon, if she's anywhere round, 'll dodge from left to right, or from right to left, like a screw's lantern down a dark alley. And I do often look to see my face in the sky like as in slidin' water, an' seen it, too, or thought I seen it! But the pretty-prettiest sight of all is, the light from the windows on the steam blowin' past from the loco's steam-stack—many's the night I seen fine gay women dancing in it not a foot from my han'."

Here he paused, and from the look of his face I judged that a shadow had fallen across the sunshine of his mood.

"It's cur'ous"—he proceeded in a less rounded voice—"it's mighty cur'ous how often I see them nakked spooks dancing in the steam, or, for that matter, on them lumpy white clouds on a windy morning, or even in cotton clo'es washed and hung out to dry in the wind. An' las' time I was in the pen the Galway,<sup>1</sup> warned me agin' em. 'Don't think more about them than you can help,' he says, serious-like, 'an' shut your eyes to them, when they come; for I tell you,' he says slow an' solemn, 'they are white devils of the flesh, born and bred in your own black heart, and they have power to plague both the body and the soul.' An' thinkin' to scare me he told me that if I didn't let up thinkin' about open-air spooks I'd find myself in the Bug-house<sup>2</sup> in less'n a mule's kick."

"The Bug-house," he resumed gaily as before, "is a nasty name for a gen'leman's hotel, but no such a bad place, surely! Nobody ever works the boys boardin' there, and I'm told the grub's most as good as Elmiry. I seen a monshous big Bug-house somewheres in the Bay State—I can't mind the name o' the town, but I could take you there cheap—an' watched 'em through the steep iron railins quite a bit. Some was sittin' quiet by the wall dead asleep or blinkin' their eyes at the sun;

<sup>1</sup> A clergyman.

<sup>2</sup> Lunatic asylum.



two-three others was tramping up an' down a piece o' gravel walk like soldiers on the march ; one was preaching an' shaking his fist at the bushes ; another was squatted on his heels in a little grass-plot twitterin' to himself an' twiddling at a great lick ; and one about my own make an' weight trots up to the railin' an' sticks his paw through an' catches me by the pants an' laughs fit to bust. The warder looking out of a lodge in the gate was no screw, not he, or he'd ha' given it over the neck to the boy that was messin' my store-clo'es.

"No, Sir ! I ain't noways scared by what the Galway says to me. An' when I'm too stiff an' stark to beat my way on the best-laid road I'll lay up in my own Bug-house an' think over all I seen and heard since I set out travelling. If so be I find a friend there, we'll sit warming ourselves in the sun an' talk over things together ; if so be not, I'll sit by the wall an' tweedle to myself.

. . . . .

"But say ! I can't nohow swallow no more o' these blamed nigger's grins,<sup>1</sup> and if you'll excuse the liberty I'll be making up to take my beauty sleep right away. So long, stranger !"

With which he slowly fetched back a roving foot, wearily hitched up his knees chin-high, and let his head droop forward. Your true blue hobo, being driven by law to sleep in odd corners, often has the trick of resting in some such tangled-up posture ; and, in point of fact, my friend's obvious likeness to a spider in the act of shamming death came into my mind only as an after-thought. Already the sun—that one and only eye in this naughty world of ours which has never winked at a villain—was staring over his curved shoulders, and the edge of the shadow (in which I still sat) has already swung so far round that I judged it to be past one o'clock. Past one o'clock ! If it was time for him to be taking his *siesta*, it was high time for me to go about my business. So I retrieved my flask, got to my legs quietly, and—first leaning

<sup>1</sup> Yawns.

my stick against the wall of the tank—began to refill my pipe leisurely.

. . . . .

A flash of sunshine in shadow, a splash of sunlight on a shadowy wall—I dropped the pipe and sprang to my weapon! I might have known he had a knife under those boots or near them. Even as I clutched the stick, his hand swung out; yet as it opened at me, there was the hanging guard up safe and steady. The fleeting steel struck half-way down the forte, whirled past my ear, clanged on the iron wall behind, and fell noiselessly. Before I was ready to put in the proper cut I felt his hands at my waist. There was nothing for it but the point; fortunately, the thrust did not miss its mark. It was foolish of me not to have seen him pulling in the knife with his roving foot and naked prehensile toe—a toe with brains! The knife was one of those heavy affairs, not unlike a mediæval dagger of mercy, used in the Chicago slaughter-houses.

E. B. OSBORN.

## WANTED: MUSIC CRITICS

E. You have been talking of criticism as an essential part of the creative spirit, and I now fully accept your theory. But what of criticism outside creation? I have a foolish habit of reading periodicals, and it seems to me that most criticism is perfectly valueless.

G. So is most modern creative work also. Mediocrity weighing mediocrity in the balance, and incompetence applauding its brother—that is the spectacle that the artistic activity of England affords us from time to time.

From "Criticism, a dialogue," by OSCAR WILDE.

**F**OR some time past," explained the editor of one of our leading daily papers to the writer of this article, "we have been steadily working up our musical side, and I may say with marked success; in future we intend to notice every concert in London." Doubtless perceiving a pessimistic expression of deep gloom invading his interlocutor's countenance, he hastily added by way of palliative: "The notices will of course not extend to the suburbs." A little further investigation showed that in order to carry out the vastness of the editorial music schemes, no less than six able-bodied persons (no particulars were forthcoming as to the state of their minds) were kept in a condition of feverish but curiously uncohesive activity. The number of concerts now given in London runs into some thousands annually. They are largely on the increase. Yet another concert hall is actually in process of construction in the West End, an addition to half a dozen

others, whose proprietors make it their business—and who should blame them—to turn their property to the best financial advantage. And a small army of *entrepreneurs* is at hand to co-operate in exploiting any one and every one, capable or incapable, who can be induced upon any pretence whatever to hire a hall and give a concert. For many years it was feasible to restrict the hours of concert giving to 3 or 3.30 in the afternoon, to 8 or 8.30 in the evening; but with the rapid spread of business they are now announced for pretty well any hour we like to mention, 12 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, no matter when. Upon inquiry it will be found that the chief—indeed, as often as not, the sole—object of the concert giver and the irresistible bait invariably held out by the agent, is the procuring of “press notices.” A *débutante* of the most sketchy and meagre musical attainments will be prepared to spend as much as £50 to £60 in pursuit of these mysteriously alluring snippets, and should sufficient funds be forthcoming to carry on the enterprise systematically for several seasons, a bewildering quantity may be accumulated, all, be it added, very much after the same pattern, couched in a technical, not too literary jargon, fairly unintelligible to the ordinary reader, but for that very reason calculated to convey to the uninitiated an awesome air of authority. Thanks to a broadcast dissemination of such notices, a trifling percentage of the concert givers can occasionally achieve a precarious and ephemeral success. A grandiloquently styled “Provincial Tour” (with reams of local press notices) may be secured, or a little *clientèle* of pupils is attracted, and a concert becomes professionally perennial. But, generally speaking, each fresh relay of victims disappears as suddenly as it arrived. A new batch takes its place. More and more newspaper paragraphs are manufactured, and the trade circulates. When, however, it comes to purchasing a ticket, one rarely lights upon any unwary persons anxious to avail themselves of the musical opportunities so lavishly vouchsafed. Granted that the interest of a large circle of personal and affluent acquaintances

can be enlisted, a certain number of seats may be legitimately sold for a first and even a second experiment. As a rule, though, the benches are filled with a frankly non-paying audience, dragged together almost by sheer force from the purlieus of the agent's "free list."

The programmes are, for the most part, of abnormally oppressive, ill-assorted lengths, and made up of a heterogeneous jumble of music, most of which every one concerned has heard over and over again for the last twenty years. Throughout the entire proceedings there is a singularly depressing absence of all elements of spontaneity or inspiration. The British public is constantly flouted with having no exalted tastes in music. Hence, we are assured, its partiality for Musical Comedy. When the alternative to Musical Comedy is the laborious scrooping out of Bach's Chaconne by some stern, stolid Teuton, or the ferocious pounding at a Beethoven or a Brahms sonata by some in other respects probably amiable and well-intentioned young lady—then, on the whole, the British public, perhaps, makes its choice with an appreciable strain of wisdom. As to the divinities round whom all this music-making chiefly centres, viz., the critics, a reiterated monotony of listening to hundreds of intolerably dull performances must in the long run blunt any original qualifications of perception and acumen. The critics, in fact, would at last appear to lose all faculty for distinguishing between good and bad. For themselves this position may at times be almost enviable, but it is naturally disastrous where any nascent germ of talent is to be appraised; and looking back over a record of some twenty years, it becomes painfully perceptible that artistic merit, whether native or foreign, is finding it ever and ever harder to win recognition in England; if originality and a note of genius quietly cultivated, with integrity of purpose, should eventually triumph and be heard above the voice of a mediocre crowd, the goal would seem to be reached, not with the aid, but rather in spite of, the press. It may be questioned whether the editorial standpoint as to the uses of

music makes the critic what he is or *vice versâ*. Probably the one reacts on the other, with, it may be, a slight preponderance on the side of the editorial influence. The music critic has not often revealed himself as an agitator. He prefers to swim with the tide and earn a tranquil, honest livelihood. The ethics of our musical criticism—this, by the way—are on an entirely different plane to those of Berlin and New York. Or should the critic happen to be of a combative disposition, after a thoughtful survey of the situation in general, he will no doubt elect to cultivate his energies in some more hopeful and expedient channel. We have no well written, literary up-to-date music journal of a kind to interest intellectual circles; and neither our monthly nor our better class weekly reviews devote much space to the art. Moreover, such articles on music as do appear from time to time in their pages do not always strike one as being the most illuminating of the contents. For more lengthy essays in book form, we are not wanting in biographers, historians, pedagogues of music, several of them extremely erudite and conscientious researchers. The delightfully scholarly writings of Mr. W. H. Hadow are examples of this type of musical criticism; or the trenchant, comprehensive style of Mr. Ernest Newman; but theirs is mainly a retrospect survey of the creative side of music, leaving practically out of account the vast range of interpretative performance thanks to which the composer's work must inevitably live or die. Thus the daily paper remains the one field open to a wide, embracing range of contemporary musical criticism; and one may go further and say that it is precisely in the sphere of the daily paper that a capable critic of music should have his best and most responsible vantage ground. Music is essentially a democratic and cosmopolitan art. It has made its greatest strides with the world developments of democracy and cosmopolitanism, to both of which the daily paper obviously has the first opportunities of direct appeal. But where a force regular or irregular of six individuals is engaged, the only satisfactory method of action must assuredly be careful collaboration, with a well defined standard of taste;



or at least a system of signed criticisms, written preferably in the first person singular, might be adopted. In regard to what may be realised musically in a daily paper, one would cite the splendid work accomplished by the late Mr. Arthur Johnstone in the *Manchester Guardian* from 1896 to 1904, work which appears to have given an extraordinary impetus to the development of musical taste amongst all classes in the northern centres of England.<sup>1</sup>

But when all is said and done, from whatever point it be approached, in daily paper, monthly review, or bound-up tome, it may easily be admitted that of all forms of criticism that of music is in every sense the most subtle, the most inapprehensible. We may concede that literature and the drama are the two nearest to us of the arts, since the stuff of which they are made is words, and words are the handle by which the machinery of human intercourse is steered. The material of music, on the other hand, is certainly the farthest from us, the most remote, and this in spite of its democratic cosmopolitan foundations. Only here and there does one expect to meet with a few isolated persons capable of forming so much as a dim mental vision of music from its notation, at any rate in the higher branches of musical scoring. Thus numbers of lovers of music may have digital and vocal facility. Their condition nevertheless is practically that of illiterates; and like many illiterates who delight in being read to, the musical illiterate can find sincere pleasure in hearing music. But in each instance the pleasure is perforce limited to a certain emotional sensuous instinct.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Johnstone died in 1904, at the early age of forty-two. From all accounts he must have been not alone a cultured man of music, but also possessed of wonderful all-round sympathy and ability. In 1897, on the occasion of the dispute between Greece and Turkey over the treatment of the Christians in Crete, his combined knowledge of foreign languages and Eastern Europe led to his being despatched to Athens as a war correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*.

<sup>2</sup> In the interests of a wider diffusion of musical culture one can but hope that teachers of music will gradually begin to perceive the paramount import-

One does not ask either type of illiterate to enter upon a critical discussion of the intellectual spiritual contents of books or music. It follows that the critic of music is faced with difficulties which do not block the road of other forms of criticism. Not only is he continually engaged in the manipulation of a medium of expression inaccessible to the bulk of his readers, but the actual technical equipment of a good music critic of modern times seems far more varied and exacting than the knowledge requisite in the making of a first-rate critic of literature or painting. The composer is the most prolific of all artists. To test this, one has but to compare the opus numbers of a Bach, a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Schubert, a Tchaikovski with the literary output of Shakespeare, Goethe, Shelley, Heine, Meredith. And music again has evolved as many forms as literature. It has its equivalents for drama, epic, lyric, and novel. One might well specialise for a lifetime in a study of opera, or of song, or of chamber music, analysing the manifold readings of their greatest exponents, and then be only on the fringe of one's subject; and in order to become a good judge of the æsthetic and technical possibilities of the component parts of a modern orchestra, or of modern solo playing, some serious practical apprenticeship is advisable if not positively incumbent. But yet again, whilst criticism must spring from practical knowledge of the music criticised, knowledge alone will not suffice; or the critic will needs relapse into the attitude of an expert addressing experts.

It is sometimes thought that only a composer can rightly esteem a composer; a pianist, a pianist; a vocalist, a vocalist, and so on. This idea is not endorsed in the comparatively scanty annals of first-rate musical criticism. It is evident that want of a capacity for score reading. One would wish to see this made the basis of all musical training, from the most elementary stages of vocal music upwards. It is possibly owing to a prevalent non-ability of reading music that many cultivated Englishmen, essentially open-minded and progressive, are still disposed to dismiss the art as merely emotional, and therefore inferior to its more accessible sisters. Where, after all, shall we find any greater triumph of intellect than the merging into one of brain and emotion exemplified in some fine modern opera or symphonic score?

Schumann and Berlioz were capable and catholic critics ; so was Rubinstein, so is the contemporary French composer, M. Alfred Bruneaux. But these are notable exceptions. Any one of Wagner's scores is worth more than his whole ponderous, prejudiced baggage of literary lucubrations put together ; and the writings of Liszt have all the worst defects of his compositions without their qualities. In the aggregate, therefore, we can well accept the tenet that :

So far from its being true that the artist is the best judge of art, a really great artist can never judge of other people's work at all, and can hardly, in fact, judge of his own. That very concentration of vision that makes a man an artist, limits by its sheer intensity his faculty of fine appreciation.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot also be too much emphasised that no mediocre, unimaginative, uninspired teacher, performer, composer ever has been or ever will be a good music critic, an unbridgeable gulf separates the two.

As with the composers and re-creators of music, so with the critic ; temperament must be a primary requisite, and the critic every whit as individual as the music which he sets out to criticise. He must give us himself, not the warmed-up remains of others. He must be a voice, not an echo, and at all hazards, when dealing with an art of the pre-eminently plastic quality of music, he must keep his mind flexible, ever susceptible to new impressions, and with an ever-rising standard of the ideal. To the artist as well as to the listener one would wish the critic's influence to be a twofold one of suggestion and inspiration. He should help both one and the other to indefinitely extend an horizon of affinities and likings. He will teach us, for example, that whereas Wagner and Brahms may be on a higher plane than Sullivan, yet an original Sullivan is worth twenty of their imitators. It need scarcely be suggested that no good music critic will neglect contact with the other arts ; he will find it infinitely more profitable for the artistic furtherance of his own profession to religiously shun exhibitions of bad music, and in preference

<sup>1</sup> " Criticism, a dialogue."—OSCAR WILDE.

will occasionally elect to spend his afternoon in a good picture gallery or his evening at an edifying play. In connection with the most interesting developments of modern music, he will necessarily master several languages, and if he is to apprehend with any quickening instinct and nicety of taste the remarkable musical movements on foot in Russia, Scandinavia, and France, to mention no other countries, he must be upon something more than a bowing acquaintance with the literatures of these three nationalities. Moreover, music in its dual aspect of the creative and interpretative is a wonderfully close and intimate revelation of character. The critic, therefore, must be something of a physiognomist and a psychologist; and unless he be master of all these assets, we may sum up that he has really no true *raison d'être*. Little less—with, into the bargain—a pervading sense of humour may be judiciously combined in the preparation of a first-rate paragraph on opera or concert in a daily paper, fit to speed through the world, a living power for good. Such paragraphs, though, will be mostly unavailable for the purposes of the genus *entrepreneur* and his satellites. "All art tends to the condition of music," is a hackneyed quotation from Pater. It deserves inversion, since in reality music tends more and more to the condition of all art. There is also a phrase of Walt Whitman's worthy of pondering :

Painting, sculpture, and the dramatic theatre, it would seem, no longer play an indispensable part in the workings and mediumship of the intellect. Music the combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human, advances, prevails, holds highest place, supplying in certain wants and quarters what nothing else would supply.

Strangely enough, though, the decadence of music is a favourite theme. In the face of its brief chronology in comparison with the other arts, we are repeatedly told that its glories belong to the past. In view, however, of the typically experimental nature of music hitherto, one would venture to adopt a wholly opposite point of departure. Possibly only now, in the opening years of the twentieth century, is music at the dawn of its greatest eras of achievement. If this be true, and in due pro-

portion to its inaccessibility, so the value and influence of good criticism are doubly and trebly enhanced, and the times are ripe for the advent of a school of scientifically and sympathetically minded, experimental critics, eager to grapple with and stimulate the multitude. Unlike all other arts, again, musical criticism has no traditions borrowed from ancient civilisations. Herein may be found one of its foremost fascinations to the modern intellect. It is significant that in our own age minds of a peculiarly brilliant and analytical calibre have at first instinctively turned thither for a vehicle of self-expression. Mr. Bernard Shaw's early essays in the *Star* are an instance of this. Supposing that Mr. Shaw had "found himself" permanently in musical criticism, and that by some inexplicable course of circumstances he had been for the last fifteen years upon the "j'y suis, j'y reste" principle comfortably and serenely ensconced as music critic to the *Times* or the *Morning Post*. . . . The very thought sets imagination rioting in conjectures. Indubitably the frenzy of the concert trade would have received some startling shocks and stormy upheavals, and our opera might even have taken a step onward since the days of Handel, and have assumed other proportions than those of wholesale foreign importations, fluctuating according to finance and fashion. But if Covent Garden be unlikely for decades to come to pay any heed to music as a matter of national and artistic significance, one does all the same meet here and there with a few individuals who appear of mutual agreement that a music of our own in England somewhere near the level of the contemporary schools of the Continent would be a credit to our national prestige. It is no contradiction in terms to allege that music with its clear cosmopolitan note, is also in its noblest phases distinctly national. A knowledge of half a dozen languages makes us cling all the more closely to our mother tongue. Might it not be possible for a small band of competent workers to attempt for English music what the present management of the Court Theatre has brought about for our drama? Might not one small theatre in London—equally available for



opera or concerts—be appropriated permanently to the interests of music, solely as an art, and with a leading policy of nationalism? Disconnected, stray opportunities of hearing scratch performances of the work at present being done by a group of young British composers, many of them still under forty, can leave an abiding impression that a nucleus of excellent material is really waiting for a chance; and with the encouragement of adequate and frequent interpretation the quality of production would scarcely fail to speedily improve. All new works, whether of small or large dimensions, from an opera to a song, would be given at least six times consecutively; and as with the acting at the Court Theatre, so with musical interpretation, every means would be taken to ensure a reputation for the utmost perfection of *ensemble* and rendition. With such a policy adhered to without compromise, would it be too much to hope that a sufficiently large following would foregather to establish the venture upon a firm financial as well as artistic basis? Incidentally the enterprise might also conveniently serve to develop a helpful category of criticism. At the outset, the collaboration of the press would, of course, be cordially solicited. Intelligent praise or blame would be equally welcomed. But the managing committee would rigorously scrutinise every criticism published; and if after several trials a critic was put to the vote and found utterly incapable of assisting the artistic cause at stake by an individual judgment, expressed in clear, intelligible language, he would henceforth only be admitted to the performances after solemnly pledging himself to silence. After a few months, however, his capabilities might again be tested. Legitimate advertising would be proceeded with irrespectively of the shortcomings or merits of the critical fraternity. In this manner some few editors might gradually be led to regard music and musical criticism as fine arts. In course of time both might hold their own in the press as equals, if not superiors, to motoring, cricket, and other affairs of vital national importance.

A. E. KEETON.



## SHOULD WOMEN EMIGRATE ?

**T**HE Conference which was held at Caxton Hall on June 18, 1906, to consider the question of the Colonisation of Educated Women, brought before the public a topic which should excite widespread interest throughout the British Isles, if the figures quoted by the chairman, Sir John Cockburn, in relation to the surplus of women in the United Kingdom are correct.

One is loth to make the assertion that a surplus of women in the community is to be regarded as an evil, particularly if that "surplus" is largely composed of educated women ; but as yet there has been no investigation as to the composition of this large preponderance of females, and until such an investigation has been made, it will be extremely difficult to bring forward any practical scheme for the dispersion of this superfluity of women throughout the British Empire.

The first question which suggested itself to one Colonial who listened to the various speeches at the Conference was—"What is thought of the matter by the persons most concerned, and is the movement for their 'migration' welcomed by them ?"

The answer may be found in the reports of the various organisations for the emigration of women to the Colonies. The number of those who were rejected appears to be in excess of those accepted, a fact which would suggest that a vast number of women—fit and unfit—are eager to find an outlet for their energies in the British domains beyond the seas.

The writer has some knowledge of the methods employed

by the existing agencies for emigration, and knows also what kind of women one Colony, at least, can absorb ; but the idea obtrudes itself that the very first step to be taken in dealing practically with the matter is the classification of the "surplus," which must be accomplished before any Government—Imperial or Colonial—can render effective aid.

What class predominates ?

Are "educated women" in the majority ?

Any one with a knowledge of colonial life would unhesitatingly assert that in the ranks of women accustomed to manual labour there could be few "unfit" for migration to the empires over-seas. No women who are trained and accustomed to "home craft" could be dubbed "unfit," unless their records are such as debar them from entering those young communities in far-off lands. The next point is to define the term "educated women." What is it meant to imply in this connection ? That is a question which Colonials would fain have decided in considering this matter.

There are many other agencies beside the emigration societies where information of a definite sort might be gained as to the "surplus." There is the International Union of Women Workers, with which the Central Bureau for the Employment of Women is affiliated ; and there are hundreds of organisations and institutions which would present adequate machinery for the investigation and classification of this bulk of womankind upon whose behalf the Conference was convened. Could all this machinery be put in motion at once, so that a specific statement might be prepared for the consideration of the Colonial Premiers during their discussions at the Imperial Conference, much work of a practical nature might be accomplished within the next three years. Without some such statement of details there would be little chance of gaining the serious attention of the members of the Colonial Conference ; and without the serious attention of the representatives of Great Britain's Colonial Empire, the opportunity of at once providing for a great part of this surplus of women, and of

ameliorating the labour problem, will be lost, while each year renders these problems more complex.

The general belief appears to be that the excess of women is found principally in the families of professional men. Whether this surmise is correct one cannot determine until the classification suggested by the writer has been carried out. Even then it might be necessary to subdivide a class, and draw a distinction between "educated women" and "women of gentle birth." A woman might have passed examinations with honours and yet be incapable of practising the simple home crafts which are of such primary importance in pioneer existence; while another, though quite unlearned, may be refined, methodical, and painstaking, and do the ordinary work of a household in such a way as to beautify all she touched. There are many districts in the Empire where the old primitive virtues are more in request than a classical education, or even a knowledge of exact sciences.

Much of the co-operation of the colonial authorities will depend upon the information they derive on the question—"Who and what are the women who wish to emigrate?" As far as the Canadian Government is concerned, the policy of its immigration department in regard to men immigrants has been to limit their efforts to securing unskilled labour of every sort, agriculturists and homesteaders, as well as domestic "help" of all kinds. It is not likely that they would change their policy in regard to female immigration. The tendency of women to desert the needle for the pen, and the kitchen-range for the office desk, is just as marked in the Colonies as in the Mother Country, and consequently the demand in the Colonies is for women trained in "home craft," and this training does not usually come under the head of skilled labour, although in truth it calls for the highest possible attainments of sterling womanhood. High schools and colleges are turning out girls by the thousand whose mental equipment is far in advance of their manual dexterity, and pioneer life calls for an equal proportion of both.

Colonial statesmen are not likely to under-estimate the worth of properly equipped women as factors of Imperial consolidation, but the question at present is, how to increase, at anything like a fair ratio, the successful migration of women as compared to men. In the old days, when transportation and inter-communication were in their infancy, it was considered proper that men should migrate and make a home for the women who were to follow. The great proportion of men migrated without any assistance from their national exchequer, or from that of the country for which they were bound; and to-day thousands upon thousands of men "take their chances" in that vast football ground called the Colonies, where a man measures his capacity for holding his own against men from every class in society.

If Imperial expansion has played a great part in the present situation, which finds a million more women than men in the British Isles, the incursion of women into those fields of labour formerly occupied by men alone has had a great deal to do with this expansion. Are women, then, to demand the privileges of men, without accepting the responsibility which men, especially the men emigrants, accept? When one scans the columns printed by the thousand upon the rights and advancement of woman, of her equality, and even superiority to man, one is sometimes inclined to ask, What extra machinery is needed to enable women to colonise? If they clamour for equality with men, let them accept the risks which men emigrants take, and go forth and fight their way in any line they may choose, just as their brothers are doing in the Colonies. This, after all, is the logical conclusion which such reasoning leads to, be it just or unjust.

"If you have a stout heart and strong hands, and are not afraid of tackling any kind of work, you will get on all right," says the Colonial to the son of a poverty-stricken peer as well as a son of a farm-labourer. Why should not this advice be given to the woman emigrant, be she educated or uneducated; why should she be "protected" by measures which are absent

where men are concerned, if her status in the community be the same ?

The writer merely puts this argument forward as regards a colony like Canada, which is a "white man's land from end to end." There are other Colonies where the "native" question renders such a line of argument impossible. But it is safe to say that Colonials would not look with favour upon a suggestion of this kind, where special machinery both for the selection and for the protection and placing of lonely women ensure to a great extent that the class which comes to their shores shall be desirable. It is perfectly true that the legislators who made the homestead laws in the Colonies took no cognisance of the part which single women might play in Empire-making, but they will need an assurance that women are qualified to develop the land before this concession can be obtained. Meanwhile women will ask what inducements have been held out to them which can compare with those given by the Colonies to their brothers and kinsmen ? They are perfectly justified in doing this, but, nevertheless, the part played by the women of the pioneer settlements in successful colonisation is incontestable, and as far as Canada is concerned, the writer is prepared to state that the ultimate success of the immigrant, from whatever class he may spring, is greatly dependent upon the fitness and adaptability of the woman, be she wife or sister. For many brothers, prosperity, good health and spirits are the harvest of her toil, and of her willingness to endure petty hardships with the gaiety of a good comrade.

Here one comes to the question of matrimony ; but from the figures quoted by Sir John Cockburn, nothing but a series of Salt Lake cities would equalise the proportion of men and women, even in the Colonies ; and the idea of considering this question in cold blood as a remedy for the "existing state" of affairs is doubtless as repellent to the women whose interests are in question as it is to the writer of this article, whose experience of the Colonies leads her to believe that while a hasty and improvident marriage in England amounts to more than

an error, the marriage of the inexperienced with the inexperienced in the Colonies may be alluded to in even stronger terms, particularly in those remote districts where "experience" is more valuable than gold.

So one may dismiss this theory of "matrimony" (except it comes in the natural order of things) as untenable. What, then, is to be done? The answer, to the mind of the writer, is very simple. Such work as has already been done by agencies like the British Women's Association, the South African Women's Committee, and the Colonial Training College at Swanley, on a comparatively small scale, should be encouraged and extended in order that it should meet the requirements of the case.

The classification and investigation suggested would greatly strengthen this movement, which requires steady pecuniary help from the Imperial and Colonial Governments, in the form of a considerable loan at the lowest possible rate of interest. This would accelerate the movement of women's migration to the Colonies in every stratum of society.

Colonial Training Colleges have already proved especially serviceable in promoting the movement among what are called "educated women," and their usefulness is proved without a shadow of doubt. That the students have shown a willingness to add to their knowledge of "home craft" is in itself an omen that they have within them the virtue which makes for success in the Colonies.

The educated woman who submits herself to a period of instruction in the simple rudiments of "home-making" is the one most likely to make a success of her experiment in colonisation. She adds a practical knowledge of household work to her store of wisdom gleaned from the College Library, and becomes in truth a "pioneer" from the instant she enters the Training College.

The impetus given to the emigration of men to the Colonies during the past five years has been enormous, and the individuals appointed to examine the material of which the "surplus" of women in the United Kingdom consists might



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do well to extend their labours, and obtain information as to the number of women as compared to men who have migrated during that period.

To get at the root of the emigration question in its relation to women, figures and facts clearly arranged and tabulated are required. For the first time in the history of our race we possess a census of the British Empire, and the time is ripe for a widespread and comprehensive effort to adjust the proportions of the two sexes within that Empire upon something like an equal basis.

M. F-G.

## A BUDGET OF ROMAN LETTERS

SENECA TO LUCILIUS

THE Letters of Seneca to Lucilius have had their day, and are, perhaps, now unduly neglected. In truth they are somewhat of a rubbish-heap, in which, however, "finds" occur—not too plentifully. They belong to an age stamped with a name of infamy, that of Nero—an age which, in the terrible pages of Tacitus, shows like a very carnival of wickedness. Yet they throw little light on the temper of men and women in Rome while this wild licence was unblushingly paraded before their eyes, and still less on the attitude of the great subject nations who, one after another, had been taught to accept law from the inhabitants of a few square miles of territory on the banks of the Tiber. The amount of incidental, topical matter in them is disappointingly small; nor does any breath of humour enliven their seriousness. Moreover, the moral lectures which form so large a part of their bulk are for the most part hopelessly stale.

From the tenor of these remarks it will be inferred that it is not the purpose of the present writer to recommend the perusal of these Letters to the general reader. Indeed, they would hardly reward his labour. The most conscientious reader finds himself reduced to skipping page after page. Not only do the well-meant moral lectures grow tedious, but whole letters are taken up with logical quibbles and similar rubbish of the schools. In a well-known passage of his Essays

("Of Studies"), Bacon tells us that while some few books are "to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention," others "may be read by deputy and extracts made by others." No injustice is done to the author by placing him—at least, so far as these letters are concerned—in the latter category, and the words of the philosophic essayist aptly indicate the aim of the present writer—to play the unambitious part of deputy-reader.

There was a time when the writings of Seneca had an immense vogue, heightened, perhaps, by the writer's shadowy association with the Apostle Paul.<sup>1</sup> In the Middle Ages hardly any classical author was more frequently quoted, his sententious manner readily lending itself to such use. In Chaucer, the "Tale of Melibœus"—a practical homily—is full of scraps from him. "Mesure of wepyng should be conserved, after the love of Christ, *that techeth us Senec*"; "he that is irous and wroth, *as saith Senec*, may not speak but shameful things," &c. Montaigne had a great liking for Seneca. "The knowledge I seek," says the easy-going philosopher, "is here communicated in loose pieces that are not very tedious to read; otherwise I should not have patience to look at them." The Epistles to Lucilius he characterises as "the most beautiful and profitable of the author's productions" (Essays, Bk. ii., 10).

In spite of the depravity of Rome during the first century of the Christian era, the period was one in which moral reform was "in the air."<sup>2</sup> Philosophy had become practical, and moral teachers abounded. Some of these were undoubtedly sincere, earnest men. In an interesting autobiographical passage, Seneca recalls the enthusiasm with which as a youth he listened to the lectures of a teacher named Attalus. In his

<sup>1</sup> The so-called correspondence between St. Paul and Seneca is spurious. "Besides the evidence from style, some of the dates are sufficient to condemn the letters as clumsy forgeries" (Merivale, H. R., vi., 457).

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Hatch's "Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church," and Dr. Dill's "Roman Society under Nero."

old age, he tells us, he still kept up temperate practices learned from him. Under the spell of another, Sotion, a Pythagorean, he for a considerable time refrained from animal food ; and his admiration for both these men seems to have been as sincere as it was wholesome. Fifty years later, Pliny the younger gives a most attractive portrait of another such teacher, named Euphrates (Ep. 1, 10).

It is pre-eminently as a moralist that Seneca appears in these letters ; and this makes it almost impossible to evade the inquiry how far he was worthy of the character. The age over which his life extends (? 7 B.C. to 65 A.D.) was notoriously and abnormally corrupt. The old simple morality had been undermined by fast increasing wealth and luxury, and its ruin was consummated by the frightful unloosing of man's worst passions which marked the long period of civil war. Seneca was fully alive to the grossness of the general corruption. In a passage of terrible suggestion (Ep. 43) :

I will tell you a thing [he writes] by which you may gauge our morals. There is hardly a man to be found who dare live with open doors . . . The walls of our houses are less for safety than for the hiding of our vices.

Is this an outburst of outraged feeling—as of some prophet unveiling hidden chambers of foul imagery, or is it the confession of one who himself is a sharer in the corruption which he exposed? Gladly as we would take the former view, it is with some misgiving that we read his own halting reply to some who charged him with inconsistency of life :

I am no model wise man, nor ever shall be. What I demand of myself is, not indeed to be on a level with the best, but to rise above the bad [as he elsewhere puts it, "*non inter pessimos esse*," not to be among the *very bad*] . . . When I speak of the Happy Life, it is not of myself I speak, for I live in a perfect flood of vice. I speak of virtue itself, and when I attack vices it is my own above all that I attack. *When I have the ability, I will live as I ought* ("*cum potuero vivam quomodo oportet*").—("De Vita Beata," 18.)

The man who was constrained to write thus was no moral hero. But he partially reconquers our sympathy when he goes on to say :

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But no malignity shall prevent me from praising the Life, not that which I myself live, but that which I know I ought to live, from worshipping at the shrine of virtue, and at a wide interval humbly creeping along in her footsteps.

Seneca's position as tutor and counsellor to Nero was perilous in the extreme, and the extent to which he allowed himself to justify or palliate the crimes of his imperial master is indeed deplorable. On the other hand, it would be unreasonable to deny him his share of credit for the comparative innocence of the earlier part of Nero's reign—a period afterwards thrown into relief by the insensate outrages and enormities of its later and longer portion. But it was a fatal error to continue to hold a position in which it was not possible for him to be honest. Probably he overrated the value of his restraining influence. However that may be, we find him clinging to power and place, till when he is at length reduced to the necessity of throwing himself and his possessions at the tyrant's feet, his tardy resignation fails to move our sympathy.

Seneca's death, by enforced suicide, took place A.D. 65. Tacitus gives a vivid and detailed account of his last moments. The philosopher and his wife Paulina, who resolved to perish with him, on receiving the fatal mandate, opened each a vein simultaneously. Seneca himself perished, not without much lingering agony. In the case of his wife, the process of dissolution was stayed by Nero's order, and she survived her husband by some years; remaining faithful to his memory, and still attesting by her pallor the severity of the trial to which she had been subjected.

The main object of the letters to Lucilius seems to be to present in an informal, and, as far as possible, an attractive manner, a course of moral instruction for the guidance of one desirous to live well. From this point of view it may be compared with such a work as William Law's "Serious Call." The philosophy on which it is based is mainly Stoic—a law of life not ill-fitted for evil days. It was the philosophy of self-

respect and of duty; and in numberless instances it proved adequate to the sustaining of noble souls in dire straits. It had its saints too. Chief among these are the "halting slave"<sup>1</sup> Epictetus, whose "Enchiridion"—manual of a self-reliant life that would be proof against the menace of circumstance—still subsists, like some abandoned shelter in an arctic world; the Emperor-philosopher, whose "Meditations" (on "talks to himself"<sup>2</sup>) have in these latter days gained a new lease of life less by their philosophy than by their kindly humanity; Cato, of Utica, alone spotless among the later republicans of Rome; Thræsea, whose manly spirit held itself erect amid the grovelings of a degenerate senate. It is worth while to present an outline of the scheme of life by which these men strove to live:

I will submit to all hardships, propping body by mind; I will hold riches light whether possessing or denied them; *I will live as one who knows that he was born for the service of all*; what I have I will neither hoard like a miser nor squander like a spendthrift. I will do nothing for fame's sake—all for conscience' sake. I will have the assurance that the world is my country and the gods its governors, judges of word and deed. When I am called to depart I will do so with the avowal that I have kept a good conscience, that no man's liberty has been curtailed by me, nor mine by another. [The Stoic held that the wise man's soul was beyond the control of another.] The man who has these aims is on the road to the gods, even if he fall by the way:

"Magnis tamen excidit ausis" ("De Vita Beata," xx, xxi.).

A striking feature of the new morality is its altruistic character. "As one born for the service of all." This is the new note already being heard fuller and clearer from more impassioned lips, and destined to be the final dominant one. In these letters we are continually coming upon passages which show a zeal for the rescue of souls akin to that of the Christian evangelist. In one (29) the writer discusses the question whether or no it is wise to seek to effect the reformation—as one might say the salvation—of all. In the spirit of the Salva-

<sup>1</sup> See Arnold's sonnet,

"Who prop, thou askst, in these bad days, my mind?"

<sup>2</sup> πρὸς αὐτόν, the Greek title of the "Meditations."



tion Army, Diogenes had preached to all alike. Enthusiastic teachers would button-hole the passing stranger :

Why be niggardly of words? Words cost nothing. How can I forecast the result? This I do know—the more I appeal to, the more likely to benefit some. Open your hands wide! Bid them awake!

The writer expresses the liveliest solicitude for the moral progress of his pupil. The receipt of a hopeful response to his counsels is enough to shake off from his shoulders the burden of years. "Hasten onwards," exclaims the spiritual director. "Think how you would increase your speed if an enemy were in full pursuit. Quicken your pace and escape!" Who can fail to catch here a thrill of that same wave of feeling which had but recently burst forth, in more solemn tones, on the banks of the Jordan, "Flee from the wrath to come!" Even so Bunyan's pilgrim is exhorted, "Flee, flee for thy life!"

In another (Ep. 38), we have a striking parallel to one of the best-known parables of a greater Teacher :

We must sow the seed. Small as it is at first, when it has found fit soil it unfolds its powers, and from being the least of things (compare Matt. xiii. 32), it spreads abroad to the amplest growth. So it is with truth (ratio). It is but a small thing to look at, in operation it grows . . . It is with instructions, I repeat, as with seeds: small as they are, only let a fine mind receive them, the mind, too, will work and give a large return.

"Some an hundred-fold, some thirty-fold," says the more graphic Oriental parallel.

As might have been expected, the "guide, philosopher, and friend" had something to say on the subject of reading. Note-books (*commentarii*) and books of extracts were much in fashion in those days of general but shallow culture. Seneca has no patience with this kind of reading. "Don't imagine that you can appreciate a great author by dipping into his writings—just sipping them, as it were. Make yourself acquainted with him as a whole—*tota tibi inspicienda sunt*." Above all, he reiterates, remember that philosophy is for life, not for the study only. "It is no use to have mastered theory; your profiting must appear in life and character."

Some powerful side-light is thrown upon two of the most gigantic evils of pagan Rome—the gladiatorial shows and slavery. We learn how the innate pride of the victims of Roman cruelty would sometimes display its recoil from the ignominy of being “butchered to make a Roman holiday.” One determined fellow, Seneca tells us, when being conveyed in a carriage of some sort to the arena, feigning drowsiness, managed to get his head down between the revolving spokes—or perhaps between the spokes and the car—and there held it till his neck was smashed. Another, a German, seizing his opportunity while yet in the cells of the amphitheatre, rammed a lavatory brush with all his force down his throat and so perishing suffocated eluded his hated conquerors (Ep. 70).

These brutal sports seem to have increased in ferocity with the decadence of morals. They became feasts of blood rather than exhibitions of prowess. At an earlier period, our author tells us, there would be an interval between the morning and the afternoon shows, which was filled up with some light diversion of a dramatical-farcical kind :

Now it is filled up with the massacre of defenceless men—criminals, we are told. This brutal display is relished more than the combats. Every blow sinks deep. “Why object? The man is a murderer, and has deserved his fate.” “That may be, but what is *your* desert that you should feast on such a spectacle” . . . “Kill! Apply the hot iron! The scourge! What possesses the wretch to shrink in such fashion from the *coup-de-grâce*? The creature might show a little manliness in dying!”

It was not for several centuries yet that these horrid spectacles were put an end to—as may be read in Gibbon’s 20th chapter, or more vividly pictured in Tennyson’s “Telemachus.”

Seneca is seen at his best in his advice as to the proper treatment of slaves. Roman slavery was (Mommson thinks) the worst the world has seen. The commoner sort of slaves were so numerous as to be almost valueless. The slave-dealer followed in the wake of the soldier, and after every “glorious victory” a ruthless auction consigned prisoners by hundreds and by thousands to life-long bondage. The number of slaves

possessed by individual citizens was often enormous. There is evidence to show that two hundred was quite a common number, though one wonders where such masses of humanity could have been stowed within the narrow limits of the capital. Men engaged in agriculture or commerce on a large scale often owned thousands of these "living chattels." In the reign of Tiberius we read incidentally of a *familia* of four hundred slaves—a purely domestic establishment—suffering the penalty of death on account of the murder of their proprietor by one of them.<sup>1</sup>

Seneca bids Lucilius to be kind to his slaves. "Slaves! Nay, human friends!" He reminds him of the wholesome lesson of the Saturnalia—a survival of the days when there was no sharp distinction of master and slave. "What then? Am I to admit all my slaves to my table?" (Admission to the master's table seems to have been one mode of emancipation.)

Nay, no more than all free men . . . Judge their worth by their character, not by their occupation. A man's character is his own; his occupation is matter of accident. Admit such as are worthy; even some that they *may* be worthy . . . Let your slaves respect and love rather than fear you . . . Some will raise the cry of "Abolitionist." But the man who wants more than respect and love, wants more than God. God is worshipped and loved. Love is incompatible with fear.—(Ep. 47, 16.)

Lovers of Matthew Arnold's poetry will recall the powerful lines—too familiar for quotation—in which he pictures the deadly ennui of the Roman voluptuary. The materials of it seem to have been drawn partly from our author:<sup>2</sup>

Some men [says he] are possessed by a satiety of always doing and saying the same things. It is not so much that they hate life as that they are sick of it all . . . How long is it to be the same story—washing, sleeping, feeding, hungering, thirsting, cooling? There is no end to anything—all is linked in the same endless chain.

<sup>1</sup> It is a satisfaction to find that this wholesale indiscriminate punishment shocked a populace hardened by the sights of the arena. The sentence was carried out with difficulty.—(Tac. Ann., xiv. 42-5.)

<sup>2</sup> See, however, Lucr. N.D. 3, 1060-7.

Can we wonder, that with such a consciousness, suicide should be so common as hardly to attract attention. These letters, like those of Pliny the younger, half a century later, again and again touch on this theme. The writer had witnessed many suicides, he tells us. Here is a typical case. Bassus, old and infirm, had long struggled with ill-health, but had suddenly collapsed.

Life [says our author] is a voyage. So long as our friend's barque showed only an occasional leak, he was equal to the occasion; but when water came pouring in at every seam, he thought it useless to go on working the pumps.

Accordingly Bassus resolves on death. The usual method, abstention from food, was no doubt adopted. Seneca is impressed with his friend's calmness, and makes no attempt to divert him from his purpose. Bassus thinks it is as foolish to fear death as to fear old age, the one being the natural sequel of the other. How many degrees of the great ethical compass measure the interval between this indifference of Bassus and the shrinking earnest dread of Dr. Johnson? The sect of the Stoics, to which Seneca mainly belongs, deemed suicide lawful only under certain conditions, and then as a way of escape allowed by Providence from extremest suffering or ignominy.<sup>1</sup> Plato, apparently after Pythagoras, condemned it as a desertion of the post assigned to each man by the Great Commander.

Though the main current of these letters is ethical, from time to time—all too rarely—matters of general interest crop up. In one (Ep. 77) we get a glimpse of the excitement caused by the arrival of the Alexandrian corn-ships off the coast. Egypt is reckoned to have furnished one-third of the food supply needed for the capital and its vicinity; and the approach of the indispensable flotilla was heralded by fast dispatch-boats

<sup>1</sup> So in magnificent language pleads the Demon of Suicide to the weakened Knight of Holiness:

“And he that points the centonell his roome,  
Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.”

*Faery Queene*, i. 9, 41.

(*tabellariae*). The corn-ships alone were allowed to fly a top-sail as they neared port. In another, Seneca lauds the skill of a glass-blower, achieving by his breath shapes almost beyond the deftest handiwork—*qui vix diligenti manu effingerentur* (Ep. 90); in another we get a description of the transformation scenes which formed part of Roman variety entertainments. Suetonius and Pliny also speak of their contrivances; by means of which frameworks (*pegmata*) rose and fell, opened out, closed or collapsed (Ep. 88).

Letter 57 contains a high-flown description of what is now known as the Grotto of Posilipo. This passage, half a mile or so in length, was constructed through a spur of the Apennines, in order to form a speedy communication between Naples and Baia. As an engineering work it is an insignificant affair, and Seneca's account of his passage through it is sufficiently grandiloquent. Its length and its darkness seemed to him alike portentous. It was "darkness visible"—*non ut per tenebras videamus sed ipsas*. He goes on to discuss the natural effect of such nervous shocks upon the system—a line of observation in which we forbear to follow him.

This chapter of scraps may not unfitly be wound up with a selection of the sententious maxims so characteristic of our author and so abundantly interspersed throughout these letters:

Even after a bad harvest, we must still sow.

Live for others if you would live for yourself.

Life is a warfare in which there is no discharge.

He is great to whom earthenware is equal to plate; nor less great he to whom plate is as earthenware.

No art is good whose end is money.

Let Fortune use me as her soldier rather than as her fondling.

If your life is evil, what boots it that no man knows it, if only *you* know it?

A life without any buffetings of fate is a dead sea.

The last extremity of evil is to become enamoured of it.

No man is good without God.

T. D. HALL.

## MR. SUTRO'S "MORALITY" PLAYS

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE made a fatal error in thinking of the English as "a nation of shopkeepers." Had he thought of us as we are—a nation of moralists—he might have made a truer estimate of our strength. In England, at least, the moralist's reputation is not hard to come by. Your clever playwright who knows the ingenious use of a revolver acquires it easily. Mr. Pinero, finding the problem of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* insoluble, assumes an air of doom and, dazzling the spectators with the flash of that arbitrary pistol, fires a shot which is equivalent to "I give it up." He is hailed as moralist. Mr. Alfred Sutro never "gives it up." He is hailed as moralist too. He eschews the revolver and simulates the realistic manner. Much as he may rejoice, justifiably enough, in his success as a dramatist, it is obvious, from his choice of themes for his plays, that he most desires public applause in his rôle of moralist. In this day of uncritical enthusiasms the word "masterpiece" has been bestowed on less meritorious work than *John Glayde's Honor*. By virtue of this play and others on cognate subjects, Mr. Sutro has been instituted high priest of morals in the contemporary theatre. In drawing-rooms, urban and suburban, his problems are discussed as if they were real and vital. In some sort he has been ordained *Censor morum publicorum* by that vast body whose views of sexual ethics are so largely determined by their treatment in the



novel and on the stage. The internal evidence indicates clearly that of the two values of his plays, Mr. Sutro holds their moral content in higher esteem than their dramatic expression. Between desire and achievement, however, a broad gulf is set. The closer Mr. Sutro's plays are examined the less grows the apparent moral value of his domestic fables. And his implied claim for acknowledgment as an original and courageous thinker on the problems of sex finds no support.

"Let us leave ethics out of it," exclaims one of his heroes, Joe Tremblett ("The Perfect Lover"). If the advice were followed, there would be precious little left for discussion in the Sutro series. The trailing of the ethical coat is the principal stimulus of the plays. Popular vanity is easiest gratified by the insinuated flattery that its intellect is being occupied with profound problems, when all the time it is being beguiled by a dexterous theatrism. In such cases the audience is not exercising its reflective faculty but responding emotionally to the histrionic appeal from the stage. This Mr. Sutro knows well and turns his knowledge to profit. Certainly in his latest work he has exhibited a dramatic distinction which gives the play considerable value as an entertainment. But its permanent worth as a contribution to thought has to be gauged by the quality of its moral factors. That quality, despite the clamour of suburban enthusiasts hailing him "Master," I hold to be small, alike in this and his other "moral" plays, *The Walls of Jericho*, *The Perfect Lover*, and the episodic studies, *The Correct Thing* and *A Maker of Men*.

The two last-named are descriptive without being selective. The first is a study of a man dismissing his mistress. It pipes a sub-acute note of protest against conditions which may be deplored but cannot be altered while our social structure stands on the existing basis. The atmosphere is highly charged, and Sentimentality is enlisted in the leman's favour. The second is well written—a pæan of womanhood—overflowing with the current cant of feminism. Both are imbued with the spirit of

the militant "suffragette"—describing through the dramatic medium two phases of the "subjection of woman." Neither shows Mr. Sutro in his full development as a moralist. That position he first really challenged with *The Walls of Jericho*—in essence as choice an example of the blatant "penny plain and twopenny coloured" Vice and Virtue melodrama as ever was. It tickled Suburbia. It denounced the immorality of the Smart Set. Father Vaughan was anticipated. The scene à faire was one which, however often repeated, never fails to arouse the enthusiasm of the effeminate of both sexes. The worm as it turns is always an edifying sight. This particular worm—its name was "Fighting Jack" Frobisher—became vocal as it writhed, and Mr. Sutro pretended that, as a consequence, the walls of the Smart Set Jericho fell down flat. Of course we know well enough they did not. Dogmatic in temper, crude in structure, and transpontine in sentiment, *The Walls of Jericho* succeeded because of the noisy moralising in which the action and characterisation were dissolved. The suburbs squirmed with joy at the spectacle of Society being chastised with scorpions. Any less formidable punishment they would have regarded as mere futile lashings with milk and water.

The next of the domestic plays, *The Perfect Lover*, showed a great advance. The structure was stronger, the characterisation truer, and the language less feminine and high falutin'. Like its predecessor, however, its parade of profundity only masked a sentimental melodrama tricked out to resemble a "problem" play. Viewed in the later light shed by *John Glayde's Honor*, this summary of its characteristics is confirmed. All three plays exhibit their author as a dramatist perpetually occupied with morals. Yet what has he to say? Has he any new message? Or even any new insight into old problems? What new clash of moral ideals with social conventions resounds in these works? Where is there any conflict between an absolute or instinctive morality and the order against which, while he assents to and even aids in its establishment, the individual is oftentimes impelled to rebel?

My answer is that he has no new message or any new light to shed on old problems. No defiant clash of original thought against old sanctions reverberates in this glittering void. Nay, more, one may observe how Mr. Sutro surrounds himself with a zereba of conventional safeguards. Not for the world would he offend public opinion, though he smack his chest never so loudly, exclaiming the while, "See what a daring fellow am I!" Take that coup which has won him final applause as master-moralist, the end of *John Glayde's Honor*. This solution, in truth, is just and logical; but, in estimating its sincerity, the method by which it has been achieved cannot be ignored. If it be found that the development of the action hinges upon theatrical devices and that the difficulties of a true realistic treatment are evaded, it is surely not unjustifiable to assume that the same intentions dictate the form of the conclusion. What praise is due to Mr. Sutro is his meed for not having yielded on the one hand to the clamant voice of Romanticism demanding the shedding of a lover's blood at the hands of a "dishonoured" husband, or, on the other, to the whimperings of a shallow Sentimentality which begs that its insatiable appetite for goodies may be gratified by the spectacle of a reconciliation between husband and wife, through no matter what preposterous, hypocritical advice, and at no matter what cost of future misery.

Conventional safeguards! Never was pseudo-moralist more adroit in their use. Note the prophesied misery of Muriel Glayde's life after her divorce. Her marriage with Lerode, you have the satisfaction of knowing, will be protracted wretchedness. Note too how the descent of Lerode from honesty to deceit is emphasised. Hear the *cri du cœur* of the naughty, cynical, immoral princess, making confession of her ways for the benefit of headstrong Muriel, something in the style of the reformed burglar at a Salvation Army conventicle. What are all these but ingenious precautions against the attack of offended philistinism? And in *The Perfect Lover* they are even less carefully masked.

This play is the ideal example of the author's skill in evading the problems with which he affects to grapple. *Elopements for Puritans* might well be substituted for its present title, and M. Rostand might include the Earl of Cardew's way with Mrs. Wm. Tremblett in a revised list of *enlèvements* undertaken for varying money considerations by that prince of spadassins, Straforel. This delectable nobleman and the eloping lady agree to talk no word of love until after a divorce has been obtained. And—oh triumph of all the respectabilities!—they enlist the sympathetic services of an aristocratic spinster to act as chaperon during their voyage across the Atlantic!

I may perhaps point out here that the much debated end of *John Glayde's Honor* is no more than a repetition of the situation in the third act of *The Perfect Lover*, wherein the "wronged" husband is first furious (like Glayde), then resigned (like Glayde) to the idea of divorce, and finally goes back to money-making (also like Glayde). (It is a curious fact that Mr. Sutro's heroes are always enormously rich.) In essentials Glayde is a replica of Wm. Tremblett—with the added suavity of Mr. George Alexander's best County Council manner. Like Tremblett and many another man who has had to reconcile injured vanity with abhorrent fact, he makes a virtue of necessity and exclaims, "Let him take her and keep her!"—only he does it with a spiteful insinuation of potentialities of deception on his wife's part which deprives his surrender of any semblance of grace. It is Brabantio's final stab at Othello over again: "She has deceived her father, and may thee!" There is much malice in John Glayde's warning to Lerode: "Take her and help her—to lie and betray no more."

A nice point of morals is raised by the scrupulous conduct of Mr. Sutro's eloping Earl. "Not a word of love until after the divorce!" say the lovers, and clinch the bargain by throwing in a chaperon. As their conduct before departure has been irreproachable, it seems as if the husband is to be morally tricked into obtaining a divorce to which he is not legally

entitled. Or does the author imply that an elopement with a married woman is sanctified by the Earl of Cardew's conditions? Or that the perfect lover is he who is considerate enough to supply his mistress with a chaperon? One cannot believe that so astute a maker of plays as Mr. Sutro did not appreciate the exact effects of such safeguards. Obviously they are part and parcel of his method of supplying a sentimental public with "realistic" drama "guaranteed free from offence!"

One other fact there is which sets the final stamp of unreality on the moral pretensions of these plays. A resolute disregard of the normal sequel of matrimony, the existence of children, can only indicate an intention to ignore the steep paths of a true realism in favour of the theatrical road which is so much less difficult to traverse. Though he has been married many years, John Glayde has no children. Mrs. Wm. Tremblett's only child ("The Perfect Lover") has been killed off before the play begins. Indeed, Mr. Sutro displays quite a flair for dramatic infanticide, depicting a society which has apparently based its rule of life on a perverted application of the economic laws propounded by the late Rev. Mr. Malthus. See the wisdom of this course. It defeats by anticipation Suburbia's chorus of disapproval of naughty matrons who leave their children for their lovers. In certain romantic circumstances Suburbia may condone the simple act of flight from brutal (stage) husbands. But child-desertion it cannot forgive. Thus the absence of children saves Mrs. Tremblett and Mrs. Glayde alike from the condemnation which would overwhelm them if Mr. Sutro had not indulged a preliminary slaughter of the innocents. Now they are spared the last denunciations—through Mr. Sutro's ingenuity and forbearance. Even while he tricks his audience of its grudging sympathy, he appeases its wrath by yielding the concession it demands. He knows well that, in her heart of hearts, My Lady Suburbia does not resent either Mrs. Glayde or Mrs. Tremblett, for even she in sentimental mood concedes the right of revolt against the wretched conditions of these miserable



marriages. What Her Potency resents is the visible and audible expression of mutiny—in other women. Revolt must be tintured with rosewater. Imprimis, the children must not suffer. And, since he knows that, if he adhered to strict realism, they would suffer, our author, by virtue of his power as special providence, sees to it that his heroines are childless. Suburbia is, however, consoled in the foreknowledge that, on moral grounds, Mrs. Glayde will suffer. To complete his purpose of diverting from her the sympathy which otherwise might be extended to her, Mr. Sutro compels her to a course which truth-hating Suburbia loathes. What Mr. Sutro's feminine audiences hate in Muriel is not her revolt; that they can endure. But, shirking the truth themselves, they are sickened by her steadfast and effective lying to her husband in order to save her lover, as she believes, from death. Thus by an adroit use of a naturalistic method Mr. Sutro achieves his object of alienating sympathy from a sinful heroine, while at the same time he strengthens his easily earned reputation for fearlessness and moral courage.

Intimately allied with this aspect of Mr. Sutro's work—viz., the ingenious use of a simulated realism to enhance the effects of his conventional methods—is the peculiar feminist nature of the appeal of the whole series of domestic plays. The quality of their heroes affords an illuminating commentary on the inherent feminism of these fables. Frobisher, Cardew, Tremblett, Glayde—they are all women's heroes. They are of the breed of men whom women adore because of their capacity to brow-beat other women. And the solutions of the play are made for feminine consumption too. They are either sentimental (*The Walls of Jericho*), hypocritical (*The Perfect Lover*), or theatricalism masquerading as daring originality (*John Glayde's Honor*). One has no right to complain that Mr. Sutro does not give us something else than he does. After all, the first business of a dramatist—and the last—is to write entertaining plays. Mr. Sutro, though, affects to do something more than this, even while he burkes the questions he pretends to answer.



For the men and women of his "theatre" are mere labelled projections of certain aspects of character chosen "to make a case," and are not complete human beings, as we meet them on the daily round. Let us, however, argue these people according to the author's pretence of realism. Alethea in *The Walls of Jericho* is the heroine in the mood of renunciation. Is it cynical to smile at renunciation on £100,000 a year? Her resolution, one feels, is but a momentary ebullience of sentimentality, which will vanish long before the Queensland Arcady is reached. And Jack Frobisher?—"Fighting Jack," like the rest of Mr. Sutro's heroes, is one of the favourite creations of feminist fiction. He belongs to that order of strong men who act weakly until the judicious moment arrives for them to strike at the throbbing heart of the public by an outburst of magnificent virtue and sentimentality. Histrionic silhouettes take the place of living beings in these plays; hence the resultant of their energies is histrionic too. A naturalistic development of the theme of *John Glayde's Honor* would have been immensely more difficult as well as immensely more interesting than the action as at present exhibited. Suppose that Lerode, the lover, who is represented as hating lies, did not juggle with the word "friendship" in his stormy interview with Glayde, but told the millionaire plainly that he loved Mrs. Glayde and would not give her up. Glayde may not shoot: that would be romantic, and the habit (save in the woolly West and South London) went out with Dumas fils. Mrs. Glayde may not shed tears and return; that would be sentimental. Such a triangular struggle—with these alternative solutions "barred" and the treatment developed on rigid naturalistic lines—would provide noble material for the dramatic moralist. The means by which the solution was reached would afford a supreme test of the author's powers as a reasoner on moral problems. Mr. Sutro, instead, has fled from the fight. His development of the theme hinges on the accident of an open door and an arm extended to close it—his hint to the audience that the discovery of the liaison by Glayde is now

assured. The machine works with wonderful delicacy, but its very smoothness is only a sublimation of theatricalism. Glayde is called away just when his quarrel with Lerode has reached a point which is the last test of the author's sincerity. If he goes beyond, he is fettered to true naturalism. Lerode is on the point of avowing his love for Mrs. Glayde. What a shocking fix for the author if he speaks! What will happen if he does? Mr. Sutro's moral vision fails him. He cannot see what would happen. He knows that he will be brought face to face with unsuspected possibilities bristling with unimaginable difficulties. To go forward is to court defeat. If he goes backward, he knows he is sufficiently master of his resources to make a show of victory. So, with clear eyes, he surveys the terrain: he sees the rugged, inaccessible nature of this new moral ground, perceives that he has not the force to conquer it, and beats a clever, showy retreat into the safety zone of theatricalism. His action is a virtual abdication of his authority as a critic of morals. By a trick, a specious trick but a palpable, Glayde is disposed of for a few moments, and in that moment Mr. Sutro brings off his *coup de théâtre*. It is breathlessly exciting; nevertheless it degrades the play from a comedy of morals to mechanical melodrama. Just for a minute the lovers embrace. On the instant an arm is seen shutting the door behind them. Another minute passes, and John Glayde learns of his wife's momentary conclave with Lerode, and of their guilty secret, which is "secret de Polichinelle." Clearly enough, the natural development of the situation is distorted by this effect. The statement does not need amplification.

So, too, with the solution. In the first place, the argument is not stated fairly, for throughout Mr. Sutro—doubtless in the highest interests of mankind—gives Glayde all the best of the quarrel. Generously enough the millionaire forgives up to a certain point. That point is reached when his wife formulates in words the physical fact of her liaison with Lerode. This is nothing new to Glayde; yet he at once assumes an attitude of horror. He emits "a great cry." He

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"writhes." He is "broken in two." "Have you no pity?" he asks. Then making a great parade of outraged virtue he gets his wife off his hands as quickly as possible. Muriel's terror on account of Lerode is unreasonable. Men like John Glayde don't shoot. Your plutocratic land pirate has ever an exaggerated respect for the forms of law, even though it be no more than a reflex of his exaggerated respect for his own safety. Moreover, the suddenness of Glayde's decision, with its unexplained and inexplicable revulsions of emotion, is a proof of the author's sensitive feeling for histrionic effect. Glayde's surrender is a telling "curtain," and with the romantic and sentimental endings barred, the only possible curtain. In the circumstances of the case as stated, no other solution can be offered. The law which even Americans in Paris are supposed to obey has long ago provided a catena of reason between criminal romanticism and sentimental hypocrisy. There is no logical and just course open to John Glayde than to traverse this golden bridge. Even in saying this, however, one feels that half an hour of conversation between Muriel and John, both inherently weak characters, would have resulted in their reconciliation. Instead of this we are edified by the spectacle of Glayde's logical but theatrical renunciation.

As it is primarily the alleged moral content of *John Glayde's Honor* which attracts the English playgoer, it is necessary to examine the motive of Glayde's "sacrifice" carefully, if full justice is to be done to Mr. Sutro's faculty as an arbiter of morals. Let us deduce the motive from the following passage—if it is possible:

MURIEL. I shall go with him (*i.e.*, Lerode).

JOHN. That is your last word?

MURIEL (*defiantly*). Yes!

JOHN. Very well, then—let us wait.

MURIEL (*with a shriek*). You mean to kill him?

JOHN (*coldly*). Why not?

MURIEL (*frantic*). Why not, why not? Because I adore him—you hear that?—adore him! Belong to him, body and soul!

JOHN (*with a great cry, writhing, broken in two*). Oh! have you no pity?

[*He drops his head—she looks round as though dazed. Trevor Lerode enters*]

LERODE. Mr. Glayde!

JOHN. Come here.

MURIEL (*with a shriek*). Trevor, he will kill you!

JOHN (*quietly*). Come here . . . This woman loves you. She used to be my wife. She loves you . . . She has made the greatest of all sacrifices for you . . . she has lied and betrayed. Take her away!

MURIEL. John!

JOHN. I shall divorce her—you can get married. I shall make provision for her that she may never want. Take her, and help her—to lie and betray no more!

Even at the end it may be noticed that Mr. Sutro cannot refrain from currying favour with Suburbia. See what pains he is at to intensify the halo round John Glayde's head by means of that generous money provision—which will involve small sacrifice to this multi-millionaire. Taking the passage as a whole, what is its meaning? What indication of motive does it give? Either it implies that Glayde did not before realise the true state of affairs (a proposition contradicted by many precedent facts) or it is meaningless—except as a passage of fine theatrical intensity. In fact, it would seem Glayde relinquishes his wife to Lerode, not from any peculiar nobility or sacrifice of his happiness to her, but because of the most frequent cause which incites men to put apart their wives—viz. that they love better elsewhere. What wonderful new morality is expounded here? Surely there is no more nobility involved in reluctant submission to such knowledge than there is in swallowing a material draught that nauseates the palate. But because realism is so rare on our stage, because even a moderate amount of truth is so unusual a thing, this ending of *John Glayde's Honor*—the only one which, in the circumstances, would not be a deliberate distortion of the facts of life—is hailed as a moral revelation. Certainly it is immensely effective. Yet if proof were wanted that it had been adopted, not on account of its intrinsic truth, but because of the histrionic value of its unconventionality, it is to be found in the passage just quoted. It is literally

bathed in limelight. You see the husband whose neglect might be construed in a court of law as "conduct conducive" standing in an aureole of conscious self-righteousness, pitied by My Lady Suburbia, who, incited thereto by an ingenious moral author, has condemned that guilty couple Mrs. Glayde and Lerode to live unhappily ever after—even though married. "Across the bridge" melodrama was never more thorough-going in its dogmatic teaching. As contributions to the discussion of morals, Mr. Sutro's plays and the efforts of the transpontine dramatists are of identical nature. In their points of view and their outlook on sexual morals I see no essential difference. They differ only in manner and manners.

Where in all these works has Mr. Sutro established his claim to consideration as a bold or keen speculator on the problems of sex and domesticity? Frankly, I cannot discover wherein he has justified this reputation. I find no new point of view, no individual philosophy, no message. On the other hand, his moral teaching seems founded only on the mirage of theatricalism. He perceives the possibilities of the exploitation of certain phenomena of conjugal life. But the exploitation is sheer histrionics or nothing. When Nora Helmer slammed the door of her doll's house, she banged it on a situation which left us in turmoil with a new moral proposition, marvelously stated. Even such defective *dramas à thèse* as Brieux's *Maternité* and *Les Hanneçons* are braver challenges of certain accepted standards and moral sanctions. All the difficulties are postulated, the conflict between an absolute, instinctive justice and morality on the one side, and social order on the other, is set forth in the clearest terms; there are no evasions. Mr. Sutro, however, besides being no guide to the new, is not even an interpreter of the old. He but exploits convention adroitly in the interests of a brilliant "theatre." He would play the moralist and censor. And by dint of noisy repetition of a sort of *sinfonia domestica* he has been hailed in these names by a public equally shallow in sentiment as in thought. Until the content of these plays be scrutinised for their moral value.

the author's implicit appraisal of them as real contributions to the discussion of sexual problems may be lightly accepted; but such inspection only reveals, behind the ample cloak of a most interesting and ingenious dramatic expression, a moral vacuum. There is in these plays no demonstration of any sustained new thought, or true statement of vital problems. Examine the moral content of these clever fables and you will not find any element that is not either sentimental or conventional, or that is not dictated by the insistent, irrepressible voice of Theatrical Effect.

ANTHONY L. ELLIS.



## DISCIPLINE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

**T**HE elementary schools have a sufficiently bad reputation in respect of many things, but in respect of one thing their reputation is good. Everybody admits that the discipline in elementary schools is excellent. Stray visitors to the schools usually come away considerably impressed by what they see. And if it is easy for them to mistake the appearance for reality, being, as they mostly are, public school trained themselves, the reality is still vouched for by the fact that many sensible middle-class parents cheerfully risk the slovenly speech and habits of the board school for the sake of the orderly training and thorough grounding in elementary subjects which the board school supplies. We may indeed look to see an increasing use of our elementary schools by lower middle-class people; and their practical and personal interest may be expected to bring about many improvements in the curriculum of the popular schools.

Far be it from me to disparage the one respect in which the board schools are almost universally admitted to excel. My object is to show that the existing discipline in elementary schools is not nearly so good as it might be, and therefore not nearly so good as it ought to be.

Elementary teachers as a body are singularly patient and long-suffering. Comparisons may perhaps be invidious, but anybody who realises the astonishing difficulties of elementary teaching, and the shocking remuneration offered by the State,

will readily agree that teachers are about the most faithful, conscientious, and badly treated servants of the community. That in the teeth of both natural and imposed difficulties they have won any reputation at all is proof enough that they have earned it. And I for one shall never cease to remember with pleasure and gratitude the splendid services of the mass of elementary teachers in this country.

But that is all the more reason for a fair and impartial examination of their case. Just because I know their difficulties and appreciate their virtues, I desire to put for them the real facts concerning discipline before the public, in the hope that what is now good may, by means of improved conditions, become better. For to say the truth, the discipline for which the elementary schools are praised is by no means the discipline that teachers praise themselves. All these years, in fact, the schools have made a reputation by means of a sham and an appearance.

The genuine discipline of our schools is for the most part humane and efficient ; but the very discipline which unqualified visitors commend is the very discipline which militates most seriously against the educational discipline. Of course, this would not matter if it were merely a question of commendation with no consequences. But public commendation inspires to imitation in readily comprehensible ways. The bad discipline that is praised comes more and more to be the object of the teacher, and to displace the discipline that is only praised by the few discriminating minds.

For what are the qualities of the discipline which impresses the visitor ? In nine cases out of ten, the visitor is impressed by the same discipline in a school that he would expect to see in the army. Mechanical precision, instant and unquestioning obedience, uniformity of action, every child moving as one : these are undoubtedly the "telling" qualities. I have known many visitors remark on them in loud and sincere adulation. "Perfect ! Perfect !" they say, and "Wonderful ! Wonderful !"

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Now it is obvious on a moment's reflection that the discipline of the army is the very antithesis of the discipline necessary for education. Discipline in the army is intended to consolidate individuals, and to create a single powerful body out of many comparatively feeble units. The whole object of army discipline has, in fact, a body and not an individual as its ideal. But in education the object is exactly the reverse. There the only virtue of discipline is its power to subserve the individual. The idea of a body or of a class consisting of indiscriminate and welded units is foreign to the mind of the educationist. His business is primarily with the unit and the individual, and so far from his task being the drill sergeant's task of creating a homogeneous mass, it is the more difficult and delicate task of creating from a mass tending to homogeneity a number of individuals capable of resisting the tendency, and capable, therefore, of individual responsibility. Unless, in fact, the aim of the educationist is this rather than the other, then education must alter its theory and meaning, and call itself by another name.

As a matter of fact, however, nobody when challenged would deny that in theory, at least, the business of education is to create individuals. Yet this is tacitly denied by every visitor to our schools who praises the discipline simply on account of its military precision. That discipline of a military character is suitable to some school exercises—for example, to physical exercises—I, of course, do not deny. But the fact is that the visitor is generally just as delighted with military discipline in lessons like reading and writing as in lessons like physical drill.

I have seen, in several large elementary schools, this very ideal carried to ridiculous lengths, without exciting a word of criticism from dozens of educated visitors. When one has beheld the astonishing spectacle of a class of sixty children of varying sizes and bodily formation compelled to sit at their desks for a writing lesson in such a precise way that an observer at any point would get the vision of a multiplying

mirror, and see nothing different from end to end of the class; when at a word of command, all pens are taken up, begin to scratch, and are laid down simultaneously; when explicit instructions are given to the short-sighted children to sit *as if they could see* (when in fact they cannot see), and all for the sake of preserving the appearance of discipline, then one concludes that the military ideal has got out of its proper place. But that is not all. For if the visitor should walk, during an arithmetic lesson, round a class in a school reputed for its discipline, he might, if he were unsophisticated, be delighted to observe the unanimity with which all the children placed each figure in the same square or on the same line of the exercise books. But if he were a teacher, the spectacle would shed a vivid light on the methods employed—methods which as teacher he would never adopt, but methods which as showman he would probably himself adopt. This slavish and absurd devotion to uniformity and communal accuracy is, in fact, due to the admiration which military discipline arouses even when military discipline is really discipline of the worst description.

But on the subject of uniformity in elementary schools, I have already written in this REVIEW.<sup>1</sup> Let me now confine myself to the means employed to bring it about.

There is no use in shirking the disagreeable truth that military discipline whenever it appears is always in the last resort dependent upon physical force. And this is true no less of schools than of the army and navy. The whole question of discipline is therefore intimately bound up with the question of punishments—of punishments ranging from gross physical force to all the ingenious varieties of moral and intellectual pain.

Now the essential condition of practical teaching in our elementary schools is a certain measure of uniformity of action on the part of the class. It is obviously impossible to teach sixty or a hundred children both separately and

<sup>1</sup> See MONTHLY REVIEW, December, 1906.

simultaneously; and it is just as impossible for the vast majority of teachers to secure sustained and equal attention from children differing in temperament and capacity. No doubt a born genius might manage to arouse and maintain the fickle interests of a hundred or so children for an hour at a time; but archangels, I suspect, could not repeat the miracle five times a day for five days a week. Nor have we any right to expect all our elementary teachers to be archangelic geniuses. The surprising thing is that training and practice do in many cases enable teachers who are anything but geniuses born, to arouse and keep such an interest practically as long as they please. How it is done must always remain an incommunicable secret, in spite of multitudes of books of "School Method" professing to explain the mystery. Constant practice and the inevitable obviousness of failure combine to make possible the acquirement of the art. Though it is far from easy, and therefore far from being universal amongst teachers, a considerable minority of elementary teachers are as a matter of fact able to maintain order by the use of art and without more than a very rare resort to punishment in any form.

I say this the more gladly, because in considering the methods which the unskilled majority are driven to employ I shall have to say apparently hard things. But my remarks concerning the difficulty of maintaining order must be taken as absolving from too much blame the unfortunate teachers who fail to maintain order without the use of means of which even they are ashamed.

I have spoken of teachers, who, if not born geniuses, have at least made themselves by constant practice into something like geniuses. There is a second very large class of teacher, who for the most part is intelligent enough to maintain discipline, except upon occasions when, owing to a knot in the grain of things, he suddenly loses his head, and with it his skill, and undoes in a few minutes the moral work of weeks. Such teachers in fact are almost invariably sooner or later the

victims of the law. In their blind unpent fury they are capable of the most extreme physical cruelty; and I have sometimes seen normally gentle and kindly teachers assaulting a child as if they were engaged in battle with a fiend (as indeed they are!). As I have said, it is generally such teachers that figure in the police court, where an indignant parent has dragged them before an almost indifferent public. For, to tell the truth, the public is generally inclined to divide itself equally between the teacher and parent, and so to neutralise its own opinion.

Lastly, there is a type of teacher, happily in a minority, but unhappily in a favoured minority, that makes a system of cruelty on such a scale and in so cunning a fashion that even the authorities are blinded. I have no hesitation in saying that they are the most evil feature of our elementary school life. If the few geniuses of whom I have spoken, born teachers who open a path to children's minds as it were by the sunshine of their personalities: if such are the redeeming salt of a dull profession, then these other few are the geniuses for evil. The harm they do is incalculable, not alone to the children who fall into their hands, but to the children of teachers trained under them, to the whole city to which they belong, and to the profession at large. They are the new type of Squeers, to abolish whom would be a saving act beyond price. Their enforced idleness in the community would be a small price to pay for their absence from the profession of teaching children.

But the problem of evil is inextricably entangled with the problem of good. And in the case of such teachers it is unfortunately true that they have many qualities which appeal to the minds of unenlightened authorities no less than to the eyes of foolish visitors to the schools. The external discipline of their classes, for example, is as near perfection as mechanical obedience and unwearying training can make it. It would be a wonder if the results did not appeal to the eyes of visitors, since they are exactly calculated to do so. No hunter ever took more pains to learn the habits of his destined prey than



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such teachers take to understand the whims and fancies of visitors to their schools. Only a few weeks ago there appeared in one of the daily papers a report of what was called a "novel test of discipline." A football had been suddenly thrown into a class-room of children, and visitors were requested to notice the extraordinary absorption of the children in their work: not a child raised its head to inquire the cause of the disturbance. No doubt the visitors were duly impressed, as the appearance of the report witnessed. But perhaps their impression would be different if they knew that the "novel test" had been painfully rehearsed many times. I remember in one school the headmaster had a still more remarkable turn to stage for his visitors. When specially influential visitors were present, he would sometimes appear suddenly to be struck with an idea. He would send for all the teachers in the school, asking them to leave their classes, and then invite the visitors to walk through all the class-rooms, and report to him if a single child turned its head or spoke. How amazed and delighted the visitors used to be! And when the master tacitly assured them that it was all training that did it, they wrote ecstatic praises to the authorities, with fulsome compliments to the headmaster. When the visitors had got safely away, the teachers returned to their classes to receive reports from a back-form boy who had been secretly on the watch for culprits. The offenders on his list were then proceeded against with the utmost rigour of the law. In the same school I have seen the headmaster crawling on the floor on all fours and challenging the children to look at him. Acceptance of the challenge was very rare. Yet on behalf of that master there was much to be said. The authorities at any rate speedily learned to disentangle the good from the bad, and apparently concluded that the balance was considerably on the side of the good. And, undoubtedly, the master was devoted to his profession. He spared nothing to make his school a success in the eyes of his employers—neither children nor teachers nor himself. His teachers sometimes complained that they were overworked,

but he could always point to himself as an example. Or they grumbled at the methods expected to be employed, and then they were either transferred to another school, or made to feel captious and isolated. The children sometimes complained to their parents, and the parents complained to the Board; but the Board officials returned the complaint to the headmaster, and between them the case was suppressed. Once or twice, perhaps, a parent would insist upon bringing the case into court; but it would be an assistant master who would be charged, and his fine, if he was fined, would be paid by the Teachers' Union, and nothing further would happen.

Then I am bound in fairness to admit that some of the children positively appreciated the methods of force. Their reasoning seemed to be the ancient Oriental reasoning that, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." I was not a little impressed on being told one day by a boy in my class that so-and-so's class (naming a martinet teacher) was the one to get on in,—"*the teacher thrashed 'em so much.*" I had heard of Plato's children who would, he thought, have unanimously elected the pastry-cook rather than the doctor to be their king, but this was a very different preference. I certainly concluded that children no more knew to-day what is good or bad for them than they knew in Plato's day. But the verdict of some of the children at any rate must be placed on the side of corporal punishment.

Then it is also true that about such a school there is an air of efficiency that always appeals to the gross sentimentality of practical men. Such teachers run their schools like a business, on thoroughly business lines. There is no nonsense about education (except in the presence of witnesses), no cant about training minds (except on prize-giving day), no sentimental twaddle about individuality, no philandering with educational methods. On the contrary, there is what is called "good solid work" done, children go "through the mill," they are there to do what they are told, and to be indulged in no whims. In fact, the school is run to pay. And pay it does,

It pays the Board in grants from the Government ; it pays the ratepayers in eulogia from visitors ; it pays the headmaster in promotion ; it pays a few of the teachers in the favour of the inspectors ; it pays—well, does it pay the children ? For after all, they have to be considered.

I seriously conclude that for the children it not only does not pay, but it is always at their expense. Unless we can close our eyes to the inevitable brutalising that is effected in them, to the abominable habits they acquire of mutual spying and tale-telling, to the hideous moral damage done to their sincerity by the exhibition of long-prepared impromptu feats of discipline for the gaping delectation of visitors, to the after effects of early association of all that education means with all that commerce in its worst aspect means—if we cannot close our eyes to all this, we must conclude that the children pay, and pay heavily. If we want to know why the evening schools are almost empty, why a large section of the board-school educated public shrug their shoulders when school is mentioned, why the board-school teacher is generally despised, and the profession itself so self-conscious that most teachers try to disguise themselves and pass as clerks or what not when they are on their holidays, why, in short, our elementary education is still scoffed at incidentally, and when off their guard by most of our writers, speakers, politicians, and newspapers, and all with excellent reasons, then I assert that it is at the doors of such disciplinarians and efficient business-managers and their official aiders and abettors that the responsibility lies.

For the profession as a whole must suffer for the misdoings of its worst members. There is no escape from corporate responsibility. As a matter of fact, the way in which the profession is lowered by the action of such creatures is plain enough on even casual inspection. As I have already said, praise leading to promotion is as naturally desired by the teacher as by any other human being ; and when praise and promotion follow, as they too often do follow, the exhibition of such

discipline as I have just described, then the temptation to imitate that discipline is very great. It is notorious amongst the teachers that their best members do not succeed. The pathetic struggles I have often witnessed taking place in the minds of young teachers between the desire to teach educationally and the desire for promotion have been too numerous to leave me in doubt as to the reality of the evil. The two desires appear to be completely incompatible, and it is too often the desire for promotion that wins. Now it is a hard fate for an average man to have to choose between life as an obscure assistant, with a petty maximum salary staring him in the face, and life as a successful person climbing to the top of the tree. Yet that is a very common dilemma for the teachers in our elementary schools. Once let the Board make the mistake of honouring and promoting a person known as a disciplinarian of the bad type, and in the minds of dozens of assistants the scale is turned, and the decision to emulate him is made. But when, as has sometimes happened during a *régime* of narrow-minded business men, the mistake is made not once, but many times, and the deliberate policy is pursued of promoting these "slave-drivers" (as they are technically named), then the chances of many teachers remaining teachers are very remote. Only exceptional character or circumstance will enable an individual to defy the impersonal tyranny of a complicated system, and to remain a teacher in spite of every inducement to become a slave-driver.

But it may be asked whether corporal punishment is not expressly forbidden by many authorities. How can they then countenance breaches of their own regulations, and, in fact, honour the breach more than the observance? It is true that many authorities do expressly forbid the use of corporal punishment by any teacher except the head-master. It is also true that a record book is generally provided for the entering of the details of every punishment, and that the records are periodically inspected by Board officials. But if the head-master is of such a type that he will habitually employ corporal punish-

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ment, and habitually countenance and even encourage its use by his assistants, it is hardly likely that he will strain at the gnat of making incomplete returns. What is more, the authorities often stupidly connive at this result, for a faithful record of punishments may involve a censure from the officials for its length, while an imperfect record is sure to be passed in the absence of specific (that is, parents') evidence to the contrary, I am far from saying that the record books are usually wrong, but the fact is certain that they are not always right; and they are certainly most wrong just where it is desirable to have them most right, namely, in the worst cases. In short, neither the regulations nor the record book are any defence against the real evils.

Or surprise may be expressed that the teachers themselves have not long ago moved in the matter. The reasons why they have not are many and complicated. For one thing, it is extremely difficult to define unprofessional conduct, even if the Teachers' Union had the power of expelling offending members. Moreover, cases of what might easily be regarded as unprofessional conduct are comparatively numerous, and if they were considered would rapidly weaken the Union. Again, the Union is in actual fact a trades union league of defence against public authorities and parents, much more than it is a body for maintaining a standard of professional conduct. Lastly, all teachers are aware of the difficulties and temptations that surround the work of elementary teaching, and are generally inclined to pass light judgment on even the most obvious breaches of the unwritten code. Thus it is a very rare occurrence for a teacher to impeach his profession. He guards it jealously, even when he knows that the public is being badly served.

In endeavouring, therefore, to rid the elementary schools of the "slave-drivers" it will be useless to rely upon record books and regulations, and useless to expect the co-operation of teachers as a body. But obviously the authorities have still power enough to cope with the evil, if once they recognise



its existence. As I have said, it is the magical act of honour and promotion that is really responsible for the spread of the mischief; and the use of the same means on behalf of the precisely opposite type of discipline might therefore be supposed to produce a corresponding result. In every school there is at least one teacher who is making a brave struggle against great odds to teach intelligently and humanely. It should be the business of the authority to find that teacher and to single him out for praise and promotion. It may be that his class will not impress ignorant visitors, but who ever expected that a school should be a performing menagerie or a variety show? It may be—nay more, it certainly will be—that at the end of the year there will be a great difference in the attainments of the children in such a class. The best children will be very good indeed, for they will not as now be left to themselves. Even the dumbest children, though still dumb, will be less dumb, because they will not have been driven and hounded to over-exert themselves. But what of that? Is there any public demand for the levelling that at present takes place? Are we satisfied to learn that the children best fitted to receive instruction are stupidly neglected in favour of the children least fitted? Are our elementary schools to be exclusively forcing-beds for the stunted and stunted, and delaying-beds for the gifted and capable? Really the objection that was once made by a Board inspector to my class that the work was very uneven almost demonstrated his singular fitness to preside over a steam-roller! One might suppose him terrified at the prospect of individuals, and recklessly determined to stamp them out. Of course his defence would be that the backward children had been neglected. The neglect, however, was no more than the neglect to assault, batter and terrify children into the appearance of smartness. As guardians of the children, however, and with a parental predilection for the halt and the maimed, most authorities will hesitate a long time before really sanctioning the creation of differences. Their theory will probably continue to be, "Equal



treatment all round," and their practice to remain, "Preference for the dull." And so long as the practice lasts, so long will the real teachers, who cannot do other than cultivate differences, remain obscure and neglected.

It may, however, be hoped, as I suggested in the beginning of this paper, that with the advent of the lower middle classes into our elementary schools, the levelling practice will gradually disappear. For with the middle-class children will come the need for middle-class teachers, and with educated teachers will come an insistence on intelligent methods of discipline. In short, it is to the middle classes alone that we must look for the freeing of our elementary schools from the tyranny of "slave-drivers." Meantime, the more enlightened authorities will do well to prepare their schools for the reception of the lower middle classes, and so prepare the way for their own supersession and for the abolition of the commercially minded pedagogue.

A. R. ORAGE.

## VANISHING LONDON

The sight of London to my exiled eyes  
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul.

**T**HE thought of Heine, a bewildered and friendless alien, loitering in the busiest streets of London, evokes our sympathy, and it is not hard to understand why gall flowed to his pen when he recalled his visit. "Send a philosopher, but no poet to London," he cries; "it smothers the imagination and rends the heart." Yet to many a native poet, and to many a painter, London has been a solace and an inspiration, for the city, despite its Grub Street, has been the kindly nurse of genius. What scope has it not afforded, what friends, what memories cluster round its generous taverns! To name the "Mermaid" is an incantation; the spirits of Shakespeare, Beaumont, and Ben Jonson rise from the past. Who but wishes that he might have called at Will's Coffee-house when Addison, Steele, or Pope was there? Who is there now that would not go post haste to the "Turk's Head" in Gerard Street to listen to the talk of Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, or Sheridan? We can almost hear their voices. Boswell is speaking, he regrets that he must leave London. "Sir," says Dr. Johnson, "I don't wonder at it. No man fond of letters leaves London without regret." We think of the "Salutation," where Lamb and Coleridge foregathered; of the "Cock," where Tennyson drank his port, and of many another. Surely in no other city could "the tavern hours of mighty wits" be more profitably spent, and the poets in their gratitude are not niggardly,

Elysium is the word which Marlowe puts into the mouth of Piers Gaveston. When the roar of London's traffic has become a byword, they perjure themselves for their foster mother; to John Sterling London is not "full of noise and dust and confusion," but "something silent, grand, and everlasting," while to Henley, "even the roar of the strong streams of toil" seems "like the speech of lazy seas on a lotus-haunted beach."

It would seem impossible to walk the stones of the streets without feeling the thrill of "old, unhappy, far-off things," yet Londoners rarely have the sentiment for London. For the most part they are unfamiliar with its picturesque byways, its ancient buildings, its relics of the past, heedless even of its present beauty. The Park, the houses where one meets one's friends, the clubs, the play—all this agreeable life must needs be circumscribed, or links in the social chain would be broken, and to those who do but sojourn in town during the season the rest of London is without the pale. Indeed there is little to rouse the spirit of discovery in the glimpses of the unknown vouchsafed them on arrival, for to reach our great railway stations the trains traverse mile after mile of mean and squalid streets. It is a spectacle which only one man hitherto has found anything but dreary. Sir Leslie Stephen tells the story. To a Swiss guide whom he once brought to London, he said, as the train approached the terminus, "That is not so fine a view as we have seen together from the top of Mont Blanc." "Ah, Sir," was the pathetic reply, "it is far finer!" Allured by the prospect of human companionship, he had yet to learn that in the crowd he might experience a solitude more bitter than on Alpine rocks. Without as within the pale the number is small of those who are willing or able to regard London contemplatively. Men of affairs who have not invaded the world of fashion, having transacted their business, hasten to Surrey heights, or farther afield, to play at the country life. The suburbs are more remote from the heart of London than their distance warrants, and so restricted is the life of the

inhabitants, that a multitude have scarcely seen the city at their gates, though on rare occasions they make excursion to historic buildings, such as the Abbey or the Tower. Some work-people on Sundays parade the streets, or take the air upon our only boulevard, the Embankment, but the great majority of their class prefer in hours of ease their weekly newspaper, their sports, or the public-house. The key of the streets is given to few.

London has been roundly abused by writers of little perception, and its treasures are often unvalued even by men of taste. Perhaps the reason is that to extract the quintessence of the city's charm many gifts are needed, not only the research of the historian, the zeal of the antiquary, the knowledge of the architect, but an eye for colour—something of the painter's spirit. The last is the essential gift, and unfortunately in the true-born Englishman the art sense is not innate. Where the arts are concerned he generally harbours an uneasy feeling of suspicion, which the jargon of the critics does much to foster. Lacking a touchstone, it is to fashion rather than to taste that he does reverence, thereby justifying the apophthegm of Canova, that Englishmen see with their ears. If he would but tarry and open his eyes, he could not fail to see that in its aspect the city is as exquisitely changeful as a woman. No longer do gardens stretch to the riverside, nor watermen ply their craft, singing Kit Marlowe's verses; but from the bridges that cross the Thames we may behold skies that were never seen in our golden age, sunsets finer than are seen to-day over the lagoons of Venice. The smoke and vapours exhaled by this strange overgrowth of London, to which the walled city of the Middle Ages was but a seed, create now the most gorgeous, now the most delicate effects of atmosphere, for smoke and haze are often a more subtle medium than the clouds for the absorption and reflection of the sun's colour rays. Take your stand in the evening on Blackfriars Bridge, turning your back on the hurrying crowd that looks neither to the right nor to the left, the ebbing tide of humanity. The river beneath

is ebbing, too, and in the distance mists empurpled by the fallen sun appear as clouds of smoke reflecting the blaze of many fires, which rolling eastward seem to threaten the city with a horrible destruction. On a summer night outlines are blurred, or but half revealed beneath a glimmering veil of blue ineffable as the bloom upon dark fruit. The honey-coloured moon hangs low in heaven, a lantern at a carnival. The city is phantasmal.

In winter river and sky are sometimes one, a sheet of pearly grey, the banks are blotted out, nothing is seen but the water, which is like liquid chalcedony, frothing and churning against the piers and meeting beyond in dimpled eddies. Now and again a huge lighter looms out of the mist and swings slowly down, and the gulls that are driven inland from the frost-bound coast rise from the surface in clouds that blacken the red disc of the declining sun. The scene is so strange and wild that the mind reverts to the little cluster of British huts once grouped where Thames Street runs to-day, when the broad, untrammelled river flowed through marsh and virgin forest. On the ever-shifting distances of London streets which elude definition, and on the suggestive mystery of London skies Turner's dreams were fed. In his earliest youth it was at Lambeth that he painted the first of his pictures to be hung on the walls of the Academy. It was at Chelsea that he lodged in his old age, in a riverside cottage, from whose roof, or from a wherry, he watched the changes of the heavens, making a spy-glass of his hands. In despite of truth, but in pursuit of beauty, Turner has painted the world with the atmosphere of London.

To turn from the witchery of the skies, it is surely time that a plea was entered for the charm with which the air of London has endued the stonework of our buildings. There are many to whom smoke and grime are always an evil, who wish, perhaps, that our buildings each morning should be sluiced with jets of water, after the Dutch fashion, who would fain scrub St. Paul's. The incomparable Lamb would have none of this,

"I love the very smoke of London," he exclaimed. To our statues the grime is fatal, which is no matter for great concern, but in the gradations of light and shade exhibited in the blackening stone of one of Wren's churches the etcher finds full scope for his art. The adjective blackening must be subject to qualification, for the Portland stone used in the upper portion of these churches, of a kind never dug now from the quarries, is often bleached to silvery white. Especially is this apparent when spire and tower gleam spectral on the night. But even these silvery stones are delicately marked by the hand of time. And beneath each tower what dignity in a world of shadows! There are some so preoccupied with the modern search to reproduce the luminous aspect of a sunlit world as to forget that in shadows there is repose. How full of richness and interest the simple wall may be when stained and coloured by the fallow rains, the drip of water, the erosion of the air, by all the frescoes of wind and weather. The range of tone in the blacks and grays is unapproached in any building that rejoices under the purer skies of Italy. The effects are more subtle. Ignorance alone could vaunt the colour of our stones above the jewelled beauty of Venetian palaces, or the golden travertine of Greece; but in the half world of colour, the blacks which are soft as velvet, and the grays which from silver and pearl approach to indigo or russet, London is unrivalled.

Here even on cloudless days sunshine is tempered by an invisible canopy of vapours, and for this reason the blue of the sky seems more intimately near than in the South. There is a magic air fertile in illusions. As water will often give a reflection more beautiful than the object, so by this air the mean or squalid is at times transmuted into "something rich and strange," so potent a medium is it for softening, modifying, concealing, for making the values more pronounced. Even in prosaic streets the play of light and shadow upon the roofs and houses will result in a wonderful sky-line, a charming vista. In the old road to Tyburn, from Newgate to the Marble

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Arch, there is many a pleasing silhouette against the sky of roofs wantonly irregular in style and level, and in the neighbourhood of the Inns of Court, the countless chimney stacks are picturesque, like a forest of gnarled and twisted branches. That sinister familiar of Paris, Le Stryge, which with lolling tongue leans out from the heights of Notre Dame over the *Ile de la cité*, looks not on so rich a pasture of huddled roofs and winding river as he who mounts the tower of St. Bride's, or the Monument. The human diversity, the wayward energy of the houses reflects the passionate life which throbs in the city's arteries. The huge and formless structures, hotels, warehouses, tenements, can thence be seen only in the mass, redeemed by the saving grace of the atmosphere. The florid Palace of Westminster is by distance chastened to a style more nobly Gothic; the new Law Courts, despite irrelevant arcade and pepper-box, seem no longer such a gallimaufry; and the Tower Bridge, dim and shadowy, is no incongruous mixture of stone and iron, but has become simple, elemental, as befits the great water gate of London. Beyond, in the pool and in the docks, their crowded masts rising above the houses, are the ships; tugs are panting up the river, towing a string of lighters laden with coal or timber; on every wharf the task of unloading proceeds apace, and the file of men that tramp the gangway from the steamer look for all the world like ants laden with eggs. But the eye soon turns from all else to St. Paul's, which from these heights is revealed in the grandeur of its dimensions. In sunlight the soft black shadows upon the dome give to it the fulness of strength, an abiding solidity, while on gray and vaporous days it looms strangely insubstantial, ghostly, islanded in mist, yet always dominant. It is fitting that the centre, to which London points, should be capable of such paradox.

The thought that so much which has delighted the eye has gone or is vanishing is profoundly sad. If London is to have its Méryon, it should be quickly. Sir John Soane, having designed the Bank of England, amused himself with

an architectural drawing in which he foretold its appearance when the New Zealander pictured by Macaulay should visit the august ruins of the once Imperial city. He has drawn it with broken columns upreared amid fallen blocks of masonry that are mellowed by the hand of time. Alas, it is not by the slow ravages of time, but at the importunate bidding of commerce that the London we have known disappears. Against this adversary a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is all but powerless. "As with the body's change," so with many a district; the past fades and is obliterated, and a new phase of London grows swiftly to maturity. But though "good must pass," better rarely if ever follows. I am tempted to think that the advent of the railways wrought as much havoc as the Great Fire itself. To make way for stations, goods-yards, sidings, and the like, many a quiet, old-world street, and many a church, were swept away, and to the rapacity of the railways there is no end. For the increased traffic, which they fed, broad thoroughfares in central London were demanded, and half the great houses were pulled down. When the coaches no longer held the road, the coaching inns, those fair and spacious hostelries, soon dwindled in number. Scarce one is left, though fragments remain in Aldgate, Southwark, and Holborn. The "Old Bell Inn" in Holborn was a sturdy survival, but it is gone now. In some cases, by the irony of fate, it is a railway company that grants a reprieve, and the galleried courtyard, once the scene of so much gaiety, is used for a little while as a railway stable.

One by one our city churches, the rearguard of our past, are disappearing; in the last generation their destruction has been reckless. Each year now claims its sacrifice; one year it is St. George's, Botolph Lane, the next St. Peter le Poer—the stones are sold, the interments violated, the sites desecrated. If when the churches were destroyed the towers were allowed to stand, a concession that might easily be made, the injury would be less grievous, for the towers and steeples of the city churches were designed by Wren to form a group of

acolytes, supporting the central figure of St. Paul's. By their reduction the symmetry of London has been impaired; in particular the loss is to be deplored of the four steeples of Allhallows, Bread Street, St. Antholin's, Watling Street, St. Bene't, Gracechurch, and St. Michael, Queenhithe. In earlier years reasonable or colourable excuse was given for demolition, as that a church must go in order that the approach to London Bridge might be widened, or that another must be absorbed by the Bank of England lest its tower should give dangerous vantage to a mob. But to-day no valid excuse is offered, such is the greed of commerce that a church in which are enshrined the customs, sentiments, and traditions of a people, must give place to a warehouse or a brewery.

The Inns of Chancery, although but a little while ago they were an integral part of London, are now almost a thing of the past. New Inn, whose hall, with its tiled roof and mullioned windows, looked upon a pleasant garden, and Furnival's Inn, where Dickens lived and wrote, are swept away; the name of Clement's Inn is given to a block of unseemly flats, and of Barnard's Inn the hall alone remains. Dane's Inn, an independent body, in whose name was embalmed the memory of the old Danish settlement, has shared the fate of New Inn, to make way for a great thoroughfare. Clifford's Inn has been sold, and its fortunes still hang in the balance. May the Fates be propitious to this "haunt of ancient peace," so that, like Staple Inn, which has fallen into good hands, it may be maintained for many a day to soothe the senses with its tranquil charm. It can scarcely be said that the Inns of Court themselves are safe, when it is remembered how the splendid Gothic gateway of Lincoln's Inn of late so narrowly escaped destruction; and what wanton mischief has been wrought by the restorer in the Middle Temple Church, in the hall of Gray's Inn, and in Lincoln's Inn Chapel, which now stands like a steed with its head in a nose-bag.

To the gabled houses which lent such grace to our streets the despoiler is equally ruthless. Wych Street is gone, with its 'Rising Sun,' and Holywell Street, where students rich and poor spent many an hour in handling books. For the most part the worthy citizens of London would seem to rejoice in the havoc. "Ah," one hears them say, "what a splendid clearance, what fine new buildings we shall have, what a broad, straight road!" It is the broad way that leadeth to destruction. When whole streets capitulate it must needs go hard with single buildings. Sometimes, as in the case of Sir Paul Pindar's house, their relics are placed in the museums, not far from the bones of extinct animals. Some are standing yet, in Cloth Fair, where the Earl of Warwick's gabled house has been used by a tallow chandler, in Aldgate, Clare Market, Cripplegate, Fetter Lane, but they are few and far between. It is possible, too, still to find an old city mansion with oaken staircase, panelled walls, carved chimney-pieces and decorated ceilings. One such, which had been used as a school-house, stood in Botolph Lane a year ago, hidden among the warehouses of Billingsgate.

Within a year two buildings which all but faced each other, as if to suggest the poles of our society, were razed to the ground, Christ's Hospital and Newgate Prison. Of sluggish brain was he whose imagination was not quickened before the prison walls. Sinister and gloomy pile, strong to withstand assault and to withhold liberty, home of mental agony and sudden death, its grim stones had the dignity of retribution, the irony of necessity. It was a work of genius by a man of talent, an enigma, unless Mr. Blomfield's theory be accepted, that it was designed while Dance was filled with the inspiration of Piranesi. The thickness of its walls, the rigour of its bars, were revealed at last in forbidding nakedness. It has gone, like the Bastille, but while in Paris the ancient prison site is outlined in the streets, no sign will mark the place of Newgate. Its extirpation is as complete as in days when razed cities were sown with salt, nay, the very foundations were dug out.

Beneath them was found a bastion of the old Roman wall, whose dark stones, too, were uprooted, and for a while lay mingled with English bricks and mortar in one dust heap, symbol of the common lot.

The tree of man was never quiet :  
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

Emotions of a different order are evoked by the loss of Christ's Hospital. It was a familiar possession of the citizens, who could not forbear to linger by the iron grating which separated the playground from the street and watch the sports of the blue-coat boys, that glimpse of the joy of youth through the bars of time. The lofty hall beyond was modern, but the Christ's Passage entrance, with its statue of the boyish king, was designed by Wren. As many relics as might be were removed to the new school at Horsham, but the old counting-house, the very picture of the merchant's office of a bygone day, the court-room, and the little flowering garden, which were almost unknown to the outer world, were doomed to vanish and "leave not a rack behind."

Much has been done already to portray before it is too late these memorials of an older time, among others, by that fine etcher, Mr. Muirhead Bone, by Mr. Philip Norman, and by Mr. Hanslip Fletcher, a younger artist, who has given us many valuable drawings of vanishing London. But the last decade has seen sweeping encroachments, and surely it would be well that some organised attempt were made to fill the gaps in our national portfolio.

ARTHUR P. NICHOLSON.

## THEY CALL IT PROGRESS

**W**ORK-A-DAY London had put up the shutters ; and what is thought to be pleasure was in full swing. The great world-town was, as usual, full of its evening excitement, noise, commotion. Its flashing lights and ever-moving crowd were a strange sight to one who, fresh from memories of peaceful Tuscany, wandered along the way.

This was a bearded man of middle height, dressed in a patched brown cassock, the livery of the Order of Friars Minor. As he slowly advanced, he was observed by all, all-observing. His face, though weary with much thought, shone with the light of ecstatic self-sacrifice. His eyes were eloquent of earnestness and pity. His tonsured head was bare, the hood of his cassock hanging behind his shoulders. His garment was worn and shabby, his mien showed extreme humility ; but there was that in his manner of look which spoke of him as one of the company of the world's great men of soul. And such he was.

Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi was "here again."

As this quaint, mediæval figure moved slowly along the street, two small boys shouted after him—"Go up, thou bald-head"—though the words they used were culled from the decadent vocabulary of London.

Francis turned to look at them, wondering. Instead of calling from out of the wood for bears to devour them, as was



permitted if not actually done by the unchristian Elisha, this man of a kinder God gazed upon them with love in his eyes. Their impudence was at once ended, their impertinence arrested. He beckoned them to him, laid hands which bore the marks of the Stigmata upon their unkempt heads, and said, "Little brothers, be ye thanked for the lesson of humility you have taught me," and gave them a saint's benediction.

He went on, leaving them staring, stupefied ; realising for once that the language which ought to have helped them in such a crisis was inadequate, futile, suddenly bereft of suitable words. They ran to their slummery, rebuked, yet not ashamed. Their hearts were happy.

The man of Assisi, translated for a little while into the turmoil of the twentieth century, passed along his way, watching the movement, marvelling. It was so strange a world to him, this London of press and noise and tumult—a new miracle seemed happening twice within every minute.

Beyond all things else five special wonders impressed his mind.

The great stream of traffic flowed along without stop or stir ; buzzing, rumbling, clattering, with its load of wealth and people. Within ten minutes, it seemed to him, a multitude went by, more than sufficient to have occupied any one of the Italian towns which had been cock-pits of infamy and anger in his time, and during the later day of Dante. The great river of humanity and of diverse vehicles which continuously flowed past, changed, to his mind, the whole vista of life and things. How was the world altered ; what transformation for the better—or for the worse—was here evident ! That was the first of the wonders.

Now and then—apart from the stream of traffic, yet belonging to it—came a fiery monster, charging and smelling ; a hideous evil demon, with its wild glowing eyes. To all the other passers-by it was an ordinary motor machine, which the rich covet and the poor must from its effluent defects dislike. To the simple ideas of Tuscan Francis it was one of the worse

mediæval fiends in new and singularly ugly form. The motor machine was the second wonder.

Amongst the people who passed were sundry youths and maidens mutually embracing ; an unmusical noise loud on their lips. What they sang was foolish, unpleasant to the mind, dissonant to the ears, in every way inept. It shocked the sensitive nerves of Francis, did that music-hall ditty ; the national anthem of a week. How human beings could be blind and deaf to the ugliness of that vocal nuisance—there was the third of the wonders of London.

He came to quieter parts, and saw a public-house. A drunken woman, a little babe in her arms, was swung from the portal. She was undivine, bestial, bloated ; the victim—a greedy victim—to gin. Angrily and with raucous voice, she harangued some persons within the drink shop, and was all the while entirely neglectful of the fragment of humanity cradled within her shawl. . . . Three days later that tiny child was to be dead of starvation, and the woman would be clamorously upbraiding God for the blow He had struck her. Francis watched her with horror, and thought of Eve and her sweetness ; of the Virgin Mother in her purity. How woman, the daughter of love and beauty, could come to—that ; there was the fourth wonder.

He passed through courts and alleys—rookeries ; through narrow slums and passages filled with shame, the haunts of infinite misery ; and was appalled at the sight of children—neglected, ill-fed, misused, weary almost unto death, forgotten ! He, a child in heart, loved the children with purity's great passion, and was unable to understand how such folly and wickedness could be, as was implied in that gross waste of human wealth. The hope of the future lay rotting, and nobody cared.

Now and then, one or other of the little ones came to him to beg. But the Order of Friars Minor, as Francis knew it, had no wherewithal to help, other than by prayer and by love. He blessed the children and kissed them, and sent them happily

away. That was all he could do. The greatest and saddest of the marvels was this, the fifth of the wonders of London.

He emerged from the slums and came at once to the wealthier part of the town, the placid West, where there are great riches and a constant feast of plenty ; with squalor and want lurking immediately behind.

He came to a great square, one side of which was blocked by rows of carriages. He was wedged between the vehicles and a gaping crowd.

"Keep straight along, sir," said a policeman. The ever-obedient Francis obeyed ; and so was guided and directed along a privileged pathway until he came to a large mansion --a place of festivity. Red cloth covered the steps of the entrance. Some girls and women, crowded together and staring, formed lines between which guests in fancy dresses passed from their carriages into the hall above.

A footman, powdered, majestic, stood at the bottom of the steps and helped him, "That way, sir." Francis went as directed—one of the multi-coloured, many-costumed crowd, to receive admittance and welcome. The saint entered the portals, not of the decent rich, but of the vulgar wealthy, those poor things known as the Smart Set. He was a stranger within the gates. He passed into the large white hall, and at the foot of a broad flight of marble stairs was stayed by a servant, making a loud announcement of names, who asked Francis for his.

"Mr. Francis Seesey !" then cried the man.

He was welcomed by his hostess, a great woman, gross, bejewelled and Hebrew. She beamed on him with the insincere effusion of new society, saying : "*So good of you to come!*" and then turned to repeat the words to the next and all subsequent comers, whomsoever they might be.

Behind her was the host, a man of cruel eyes and heavy mouth, who had dug a fortune, by the labours and sacrifices of others, out of the diamond mines of South Africa. His

conversation, addressed to no one in particular and everyone in general, consisted chiefly of the words "Liberty 'all." Throughout the evening, Francis heard him murmuring that brief but hospitable sentence.

Francis, following the human stream, came to a great saloon where dancing was in progress. A foreign band, gorgeously uniformed, was playing one of the waltzes of Strauss. The melody and movement made the heart of Francis strangely light. He rejoiced in that first appearance of gladness after his recent experience of wretchedness, squalor, and shame; but, as he watched the merry throng, his joy grew less.

Yet it was a wonderful scene, bright, exciting, excited. Fortunes had been spent on the dresses, diamonds—the favourite jewels of rich vulgarity—flashed everywhere. He beheld an orgy of blatant wealth. At first Francis thought the costumes were of this day—the happy twentieth century; but he saw youths and maidens—Romeos and Juliets, lovers and soldiers—wearing, with anachronisms, the costumes of his time, and knew then that this was an extraordinary occasion; that the subdued and dismal garments worn by the people of the streets were characteristic of this drab age; not those clothes of colour and picturesqueness.

It was a sight to amuse sinners and in some ways impress saints. The eighth Henry was talking politics with St. Jingo, who had a tarnished halo fastened insecurely to his shining pate. Fair Rosamund, a lady with a too-red wig, babbled scandal with Peter Pan; while Ophelia, wild flowers in her hair, listened eagerly, her pitiful madness gone. Queens were cheap and plentiful; Mary Queen of Scots, for some strange reason, being the favourite. That poor unhappy victim of wild love and sinister politics had several representatives, all of them fat, most of them more than forty. Venus was there—clothed in immodesty and foam. Ancient Romans and Texan cow-boys, knights in armour and languishing ladies in all the dresses of the ages; Hamlets, monks, bishops, chimney

sweeps : there they were—parts of one clamorous and amazing medley.

One dazzling figure in the scene gave Francis a momentary shock of horror. It was the devil himself, green and militant, with horns and tail and pointed ears, holding his pitchfork of punishment. The friar in his simplicity, firmly believing it was no other than the ancient enemy of man himself, vigorously made before him the sign of the Cross, and breathed a Latin prayer. The incident made Francis popular. The crowd of guests, regarding him in fancy dress as one of themselves, greeted his action with laughter, voting it witty and appropriate, a part of the play. The green devil ran away cowering, pretending to be frightened. Francis continued to watch the wild display of Liberty 'all.

By this time the orchestra had started a two-step, and the saint, who, besides being the purest soul in Christendom, was also one of its truest artists, fled from the dancing room in quiet disgust. If this was the poetry of motion the pity that young England could not learn some of the peasant dances of Tuscany.

He passed into a corridor where there was talk, and found himself, successively, one of a series of groups. The first consisted chiefly of dames with complexions, and men, empty-faced and shining-haired.

"The Duke looked so bored this morning, I believe the governess had smacked his face." "I shouldn't be surprised if we heard strange things in that quarter before long." "As for Lady B., they say she has pawned her jewels, poor thing, owing to the goings-on of her naughty hubby." "Hasn't enough to make ends meet, owes the tradespeople a mint of money." "Have you heard of Johnnie C. and the actress?" "Don't tell any one, it was whispered to me in confidence, and so must go no further, but her husband is going to make a nasty fuss shortly—we shall hear things—Johnnie is *so* careless." "Isn't our hostess a guy and Liberty 'all a bounder?" "Did you ever see such a crowd? wouldn't be here, only they

owe him money, and one must be decent to one's wealthy creditors, mustn't one?"

Francis moved on, he wished to hear no more of the sayings of the Smart Set. There was too much brain about it—feather brain. He came next to a little group round a man, who was eating an ice. His long hair, thin face, and pose marked him out as an actor or minor poet. He was the talking oracle of that cluster.

"The man's a perfect genius, he can hang from a trapeze with his heels and drink a pint of gooseberry." "Have you seen the pictures at the Crude Gallery?" "Awfully rotten—the best of 'em was painted by Bertie J." "Awful ass, Bertie; asked me what I thought of it—said it was rippin'—piffle really, you know, really piffle." "You should go and see La Solphine at the Impropiety—she wears nothin'—calls herself a statue, and the place is crowded—so artistic, you know." "Toby's new book out yesterday." "Spicy." "All about the Seventh Commandment." "Let's go and bridge."

Francis passed on to another gathering, this time of gilded youths, who drawled and simpered and lisped. They talked English as if it hurt their mouths, and generally only said two-thirds of any word longer than one syllable. The conversation was chiefly about actresses, their legs, their looks, and their loves. They discussed the supper they had eaten and the second one they looked forward to. They voted dancin' an awful bore; and, in a little while, also joined the growing gathering in the card-room.

Francis came to another cluster, this time of elderly men, with whom a few excited women were eagerly talking. This group had several oracles; every one spoke at some time, most of them at the same time. They were patriots discussing politics, and seemed to regard Parliament and the State as a sort of machine run for the sake of their set. Their point of view was that of the rich in office. They despised the poor, could not think of "Labour" without words of lurid anger; and generally assumed that the world existed for the benefit of



the golden few at the expense of the working many. The facts of over-crowding, of hunger, want, and sin, the fruits of their own selfishness and neglect, did not appeal to them for one tithe of a minute. The poor, their moral masters, were despised, and only to be remembered when the disagreeables of life necessitated their intervention.

Francis began to speak to one or other of them, asking questions, hoping and endeavouring to attract attention to what, after all, is or should be the real question in all politics, the needs of those who have need. But those he addressed looked knowingly at each other; some giggled, others frowned; said the word "Bounder," and went their ways ignoring him. They could not discuss politics, they could only talk it. They were statesmen in embryo, of arrested development.

By this time he had come absolutely to despair of the intellect and sincerity of these rich people; and was returning to the door he had originally entered, determined to stay no longer in that byway of Vanity Fair, when he happened to hear the word "God" spoken by a bibulous gentleman, dressed as Robinson Crusoe.

Divinity was Francis's own subject. He stayed to listen to what was being said; but again, alas! was disappointed. He found that the idea of the Church amongst those people was not the spiritual union of the quick and the dead, the rich and the poor, joined together in one triumphant communion, but a brick and mortar institution, a congeries of dead souls, governed by a person with a whine who could only talk with feebleness and dull dogmatism about the mere husk of the mysteries. Their gossip was of the curate's eyebrows and the coins put in the offertory bag; of the social position of the clergy and those horrid narrow obstinate Nonconformists. The man of soul then with them was shocked at the want of spirituality in their ideas. It seemed, as it were, all show and sham, phrases and make-believe. Religion, as reflected in their talk, was no divine institution, but a surpliced sepulchre. Snobbishness shamed the altar. Francis stood lost in amaze,

reflecting on what he had heard, comparing these rich people and their outlook on the affairs of the world and heaven, with the want and viciousness he had witnessed during his walk through London.

He was roused from his unhappy reverie by the noise of quarrelling in a room to the right, and hurrying there found a tumult indeed. It was the card-room; the place was packed. Roulette, baccarat, and bridge had been hard a-swing, until a charge of cheating had been shrieked out by an excited woman. Chaos re-existed. Men sprang to their feet and rushed to the centre of trouble; there were oaths, hysterical laughter, words of hot anger. A table was overturned. Golden money spun over the floor. Two women—the two chiefly concerned—were fighting, clawing, screaming; being encouraged and backed by vulgar men.

"Liberty 'all" came puffing in, persuading and threatening. Gradually the tumult calmed, and play recommenced.

Francis stood by the door, his heart cold with horror. Was this how these people lived, when there was so much work to be done in the world, wasting hours, quarrelling, fighting, over this game of colossal greed? He looked quickly at the faces about him; in all there was a hateful expression of greedy joy, or anger, or envy. "God forgive them," he murmured, "and send them grace to know what they ought to do!"

His imagination was awake to the eternal possibilities. He saw a vision and he dreamed a dream. There in the midst of those green tables was the opening of the bottomless pit—the mediæval idea of ultimate punishment. Down, and down, and down it led to the place of the triumph of Satan. Flames and sulphurous fumes uprose, the choking incense of Hell. The forms of the gamblers were shrouded by it, their young and old faces, white with the anger of greed, were veiled by it. Oh, to be spending life so; when death and the poor were so near—so near!

He fell to his knees and prayed passionately, imploring Christ to strengthen and lead these wastrels aright.

Suddenly he was lifted and thrown out of the room by footmen, who called him drunk. As he went he passed his host, to whom he appealed to stop the evil play; but all he heard in reply was—"Liberty 'all! Liberty 'all!"

Francis hurried from the house. He had seen in that one hour nothing less than the triumph of Mammon—of Satan—in the world. It was enough to occasion a saint's despair. Out in the quiet square he looked up at the stars shining dimly through the haze, and wondered.

Francis walked many miles before the disgust and shame which had filled his heart were worn away. When he did regain cognition of things about him, he was far from the West-end of wealth, and approaching that wilderness of narrow streets and dingy houses, the piteous, neglected East.

Once only on the way was there an interlude. He was proceeding along the Thames Embankment when a woman accosted him. He looked into her face, saw tragedy written there. Her eyes were wild, her brow was lined with sorrow and heavy care. Her pinched wan cheeks were roughly daubed with rouge. She was at once a picture of infinite grief and most sorrowful sin. Francis intuitively knew her whole sad story, and in his own way helped her.

"My Lady Pity!" he said, as with brotherly lips he kissed her brow. "Sister, go, and sin no more!"

"But what can I do?" she asked.

"Go to the clergy and to good women. Go to the convent. Follow in the footsteps of the Magdalen. Christ received her. Christ's disciples will receive you!"

The poor thing said "Not 'alf!" and laughing bitterly, though her heart had been melted by his kindness, went away. But soon her laughter ended; she was shedding tears of hopelessness and penitence.

Francis had passed through the City, where wealth was asleep, into Whitechapel and the dim kingdom which appertains to that place of misspelt fame. He had come to the worst slums of Stepney; and led by some invisible influence,

passed through an unclosed doorway, up a flight of steps into a shabby room. He stood like a shadow within the entrance and watched a pathetic sight. The room was almost entirely bare ; the ceiling was broken, the panes of the window cracked and patched with paper ; damp darkened the walls ; the flooring was in holes. The furniture consisted of one bare wooden table, two broken chairs, and a straw bed, on which a man in the last stages of consumption was sleeping. An emaciated baby slumbered in his arms.

A woman was sitting by the table, sewing. The only light came from an evil-smelling oil lamp, flickering gloomily. She was stitching, stitching, stitching—through the long night ; working on a piece of finery destined to adorn some “ Smart Set ” beauty ; for which she would be paid a pittance in pence. Her eyes were almost blind with the strain of watching the passing thread. Her chest was sunken and hollow ; she coughed from time to time ; and her face was old, though she herself was not of many years. It was a sight for tears and anger. Hood’s “ Song of the Shirt ” was written all in vain. This poor sempstress, sweated and starving, was no better than her ancestor-in-sorrow of half a century ago ; and so it will be — unless miracles happen — for centuries and centuries to come.

The bitter pity of it ! The world’s wicked indifference stands in the way of the betterment of these, our sisters.

Francis, standing there, noting with numbed mind the weary man asleep, and the little baby starved and cold—the shadow of Death’s kisses on its cheeks—felt the full horror of the mean tragedy. He turned abruptly, hurried down creaking stairs and out of the house, crying, “ How long, O Lord, how long ? ”

In the street he paused to ask God questions. “ Why must this poor racked, hopeless wretch endure a crucifixion of pain ? Why did Christ offer Himself upon the Cross if misery and want such as this should continue to the shame of Christian England ? ”

The dawn of a new day was breaking. That was all the answer he received ; he read it as the promise of hope. But the irony of it all ! Extravagance and grinding poverty ! Bitter want and wasteful wealth !

Progress ! Progress ! They call it progress !

E. H. LLOYD.

## “MARCELLO”

WOVEN FROM THE DIARIES OF THE LATE  
BARON DE MALORTIE

“MARCELLO,” the well-known *nom de plume*, or, rather, *nom d'artiste*, of the talented and charming young Duchess de Colonna Castiglione, will be remembered by all lovers of art who visited the French Salon during the last ten years of the Empire.

Descended from an old Swiss family, the d’Affrys, at the age of twenty-two she found herself a widow rich only in parchments, for the Duke Colonna Castiglione, like her father, Count d’Affry, was poor, and left his wife little beyond a proud name, and the somewhat antiquated notions and traditions of the old Roman nobility. However, during the last few centuries there was hardly a battlefield where the younger sons of the d’Affrys had not shed their blood, or that of others, and their names may be found on many pages of the Austrian and French army lists. These services added fresh laurels and honours to the family, but little fortune. There is a very good story told by the old Duchess of Orleans, the Regent’s mother, H.R.H. “Lise Lotte,” or, more correctly, “Madame,” about one of the young d’Affrys of the Swiss Guard who had a furious quarrel with a French officer. The latter used such insulting language towards his Swiss brother in arms that d’Affry challenged him then and there. But the French



guardsman insolently declined to cross swords with a Swiss, coming from a country of squireens without a single old name or noble family with sufficient quarterings for the Knights of Malta or a Prime Abbot's coroneted mitre. Young d'Affry shrugged his shoulders and replied with a proud look, “The quarterings of the d'Affrys, the Habsburgs, and a score of other Swiss houses might challenge even the premier baron of Christendom. But we have never coveted a courtier's or a Churchman's honours, though occasionally a crown, and that an imperial one. We don't care for ordinary tinsel, and prefer to live by a soldier's sword.” “Well,” sneered the Frenchman, “if others don't think much of Swiss brawlers, you seem to have a pretty good opinion of your little self; and I notice you give with really great modesty the ‘august’ *chaumière*—I cannot call it house—of Affry precedence to the imperial Habsburg—quite second to you, of course. *Excusez du peu*, it is a pity our Heralds Office have omitted your illustrious name from the golden book of the French nobility—a lost chance by St. Denis.”

“That may be,” answered the Swiss, “and if I mentioned our name before the great and glorious one of Habsburg, it is my right, for Rudolph of Habsburg was one of the noble gentle pages in the third Count d'Affry's train, the future Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, having been sent by his father to win his spurs in the best knightly school of the day—and fame is no courtier, sir! As to-day, it knew of old the best man from the rest. And now, monsieur, that you have been assured as to my pedigree, I venture to hope that you have no further objection to cross swords with me.” “I don't know,” snarled the officer of the king's bodyguard. “You seem to forget the immense difference between the French guards of his Majesty and the hired Swiss companies; one, young sir, serves for honour, the other for money—for his pay! Therefore an officer of the Gardes Françaises does not cross swords with a mercenary.” At that instant Monsieur d'Affry's glove clashed against the Frenchman's cheek, leaving a red mark,

and, drawing his sword, he added sternly: "You almost forget, monsieur, that each man serves for what he wants—the thing he lacks—and with your sword idly resting in its scabbard, I fear you have not won your pay yet!" And with this second slap he left the guardsman. "Ponah! Ponah!" were "Lise Lotte's" concluding words.

Well, the Duchess Colonna Castiglione belonged to this old stock. Left with inadequate means, according to Roman notions there were only two things to choose from: to marry again—and suitors were not lacking—or to enter the walls of a convent, a living tomb! Neither of these propositions appealed to the young Duchess. There was, however, a third solution—incompatible, it is true, with the prejudices of Roman society; but the independent and fascinating widow resolved to utilise her taste and talent in the glorious art over which Phidias reigns supreme. As a young girl she had devoted much time to modelling, but in Switzerland good sculptors were scarce, and it was only during the short time of her married life that she found, in Rome, opportunities of improving herself under able guidance. She was indefatigable. "You work, madame," said one of her masters, "as if you had to earn your daily bread." The new aspirant for fame had talent, taste, zeal, and rare working powers. Some of her admirers called her a genius, and no doubt she was gifted with an innate *genie* for the beautiful, with a natural, instead of an artificial, intuition for the sublime, the truly great; and some of her early works are particularly bold, but with a refined inspiration, as if a tormented soul were struggling through the marble, to emerge out of the narrow and restricted world into which it had been thrown. After the death of her young husband, and various misfortunes, the *terre-à-terre* woes of a struggle for existence, her art came forward as the great consoler; it was to introduce her by slow degrees to truth, faith, and freedom from the dwarfed surroundings of a society either fossilising in the past, or living for the empty pleasures of an idle, luxurious life, caring for nothing so much as dear self and the worship

of the "golden calf." The struggle and torment in her mind and heart worked out through the chisel into feverish and contorted shapes and forms, all tending towards the end when originality of conception should be equalled by power of execution. Men of the same school who came to her studio said to one another, "It is the woman! How will she reveal herself?" and they waited to see. Fortunately in this case the perseverance of man was added to the feminine temperament; the artist closed her door to the world, and worked with stern determination.

Bound by the historical ties of the Colonnas to the side of the *Papalini*, she had snapped her fingers at traditional prejudice, and, to the horror of some ultra-black duchesses, made no secret of receiving and going occasionally into white society. Fortunately she had enthusiastic admirers in both camps; but during her husband's short life, and out of respect for his position, she had always avoided bringing any members of the different sets together under her roof.

Cardinal Antonelli, one of her most devoted friends, often teased her about having a "black" and a "white" reception day. However, as soon as it was possible she resolved to leave Rome, and transferred her household gods and goods to Paris, having heard of a suitable studio on the Cours la Reine, attached to a small pavilion large enough for herself and her mother, Countess d'Affry, as, notwithstanding an innate love of independence, the very freedom of an artist's life, with its unavoidable Bohemian compatriots, made it necessary for the young widow to have the protection of some relative against the ever ready *médiance* of the world, and the vile calumnies a *grande dame* would have been exposed to in an artistic *milieu* which for a time was to proclaim her its own. Evil minds had little belief in the Duchess's intention of becoming a *bona-fide* worker. It was difficult for them to understand a desire for freedom when a woman could marry. Therefore the titled old maids, rejected suitors, and the narrow-minded middle classes all viewed her with suspicion. However, the Countess

d'Affry soon silenced ill-natured comment, and relieved society of the feeling that the Duchess de Colonna Castiglione was "a lost creature."

The world of art, those curious beings who had felt the sacred fire of genius, they welcomed, not the Duchess, but "Marcello," the sculptor, as one of their own.

The small *pavillon* of the Cours la Reine, thanks to her taste, became one of the prettiest *bonbonnières* in the capital, while the high bare walls of the studio were enriched with Greek busts, pieces of carved alabaster, and glorious fragments of a bygone age picked up in Greece during her honeymoon. Amongst this exquisite medley figured some rare specimens dug out of an old garden—a head crowned with leaves, the half bust of a woman, the side of a sarcophagus, a hand and arm, in one instance a nose and chin only; but the sculptors who had not visited the classic lands handled the precious *débris* with reverence and sighed; but "Marcello" sat down to dream of an ideal, and strive by labour to gain the perfection accorded to so few. But perhaps in no art is it more difficult to realise a dream than in marble. How should she dare to imagine herself the gifted one whom immortal fame would stoop to lift out of the dust of mediocrity? There was a year of obscure toil; nothing was allowed to disturb the silence of the studio but the hand that was working in it. During the second year "Marcello" honestly thought she might undertake something for the next Salon that would be able to face the criticisms of the world and the masses, whom some mysterious intuition has made in all the countries the severest and surest of art critics.

I will not dwell on the sad experiences, jealousies, deceptions, and discouragements of an artist's life, and the solitude necessary to it, embittered by thoughts of past sorrows, the long strain on the nerves, hope, fear, despair—these can only be realised by experience and the self-abnegation, energy, and discipline required to resist all pleasure in the gaiety-loving city of Paris. The secret pangs of finding one's ideas scoffed at,

and the disappointment of finding work we thought good unappreciated, pooh-poohed by an autocratic commission of cranky old wiseacres, puffed up with conceit and their own importance, each with his idea of subject and style, flattered, toadied to, and almost worshipped for an all-powerful approval. And then the misery of rejected work—the hope of months, the patient toil of a year, comes back unworthy of the labour given it, and is stood like a naughty child with its face to the wall, holding much of one heart and a leaf of life in its disappointing incompleteness. Had it been perfect and only scarred by the tooth of envy we could have borne it, indifferent to criticism in the quiet consciousness of its perfection; but there is a doubt—we discover we are deficient in talent, the hand lacks the skill to perform the projects of the brain—we must disown the deity of our past, the joy of many yesterdays, the defective creation of perhaps even a faulty conception, and with shaken faith begin again. Such was the fate of "Marcello's" dream; but she persevered towards the crown of triumph up the hill of difficulty and temptation, because she had been baptized with the *feu sacré* of the artist.

Her first great and almost spontaneous success came towards the end of the Empire. It was not, however, from a dream in marble. "Marcello" had sent a few small things—the head of a Titan, and the bust of Monsieur Rouher, the Vice-Emperor, as he was called; and it was this bust which revealed her strange and captivating talent. The verdict was unanimous, the effect complete. It brought a crowd to that section of the Salon, generally deserted in favour of the sister art. The striking likeness of Monsieur Rouher was universally admired, people were enthusiastic over its vivid, lifelike expression, and the Emperor and Empress twice honoured "Marcello's" studio with their presence. From that day her reputation was made, orders came from all sides, and society flocked to see the talented and sympathetic Duchess.

After the success, and three or four months of hard work, "Marcello" sought a little well-earned rest with her aunt at the

Villa Diesbach at Nice, and upon her return to the *pavillon* began to inaugurate weekly reunions in her studio. A few faithful friends only were invited. A large piano was an agreeable addition, on which our hostess would occasionally play to us, or—a still greater treat—sing. In a short time the artistic world gravitated towards the Cours la Reine as its home. The first artists of the opera came, the stars of the theatre, and the poets and writers of the day; Coppée and others delighted the audience with recitals from their newest works; the principal ladies of *le grande monde* asked to be invited. Young *débutantes* found opportunities of being heard, and received under the auspices of our fascinating hostess an artistic and social christening, whilst the most captivating *causeries* kept us till the small hours of the morning. These, indeed, were never-to-be-forgotten evenings, where every opinion found a field for the display of its intelligence. There was no need of card tables to keep people awake, no supper to kill time or champagne necessary to awaken the dormant intelligence of the dull—thank Heaven they were not there; and those uncongenial spirits who came just to say they had been—left early.

Many lamented the fashionable influx, which at once ended the serious and intimate conversation of a small circle; no one more than the Duchess herself. But “Marcello” had new duties. The rising, popular artist could not choose, and would have found it impossible to shut her doors upon the crowd of art patrons and admirers who knocked at them. People of various political opinions met in a *salon* considered the *champ neutre*. Imperial courtiers and ministers had not unpleasant *contretemps* with leaders of other parties, as politics were forbidden, or, rather, an avoided subject; but the rooms of the *pavillon* had to be thrown open for the guests, and over the principal entrance was written in large gilt letters, “*Ici l'on s’amuse*,” whilst over that of the studio one read, “*Ici je travaille*.”

Many years have passed since those pleasant days; the



studio of the Cours la Reine has long since disappeared under the pickaxe of the *démolisseur*, the modern helpmate of time. A palatial building covers the Duchess's simple garden ; the small arbour embowered in creepers, where we sometimes sat during the overpowering heat of a June sun, has turned to dust ; the rooms which had been filled with enchanting music, and whose *habitués* had listened to the brilliant ideas of great minds, are no more—their echo only whispers in the memories of those who heard them. Yes, the frame has gone ; but so, likewise, has the priceless gem it once encircled. *La Reine d'Autrefois* has followed her home, and the gods of its hearth, the voice which charmed the ear is silent, but the work which delighted the eyes remains a monument to her talent, and a precious souvenir to those possessing any piece of it. As I look upon a lifeless marble hand on my table, which the once living hand of genius had modelled, I seem to hear again the tap, tap, of the chisel ; but the sculptor's task is finished, the delightful woman will never greet us again with her divine eyes, or stimulate youthful aspirations with her quiet praise. Her lovable, sympathetic nature, her brilliant and gifted mind, have gone into the mysterious unknown ; but a remembrance of them will live to the end in the hearts of all who knew the Duchess de Colonna Castiglione.

V. DE M.

## A SONG OF THE VANQUISHED

**W**HEN the standard falls where the foe assails—  
The flag we held at our life-blood's cost ;  
When the night prevails, and the last star fails,  
And the cry goes up that the field is lost ;  
When we pass from the fight that was fought in vain  
To the jeers of those that we fought it for,  
With an inner wound, and a bitter pain,  
And a stifled groan, at the heart's deep core ;  
When the cause we trusted as heaven's indeed  
Has fallen and failed like the hopes of men,  
And Truth seems a riddle that none may read—  
What comfort then ?

Why, then we think of the men who fought,  
And failed, and fell, in the days long dead,  
Whose light, like ours, through a cloud was sought,  
Who had hearts as reckless and wounds as red.  
And we snatch a hope from our last despair,  
And shout in defeat as the victors do ;  
We can live and bear, we can do and dare,  
Be the storm above or the cloudless blue.  
Like the hero of old we are unperplexed :  
“ We just lie down ” with our loss and pain,  
And bleed for an hour, and are up the next  
To fight again !

S. GERTRUDE FORD.

## ON THE LINE

**T**HE admirable series of "English Men of Letters," for which students of literature should be very grateful, has just received a most effective and striking addition in **Shakespeare** (Macmillan: 2s. net), which Professor Raleigh has written. As was to be expected, this monograph is a well-balanced study of the poet and his works, written with judgment and insight, and is absolutely free from that wildness of conjecture which has generally been a fault of similar commentaries. The facts concerning the life of our greatest poet are notoriously meagre, although this deficiency has not prevented an undue amount of importance being attached to such scant discoveries as have rewarded the labours of antiquaries and those others who have given themselves to the quest and, year in and year out, have been seeking for new personal details about the man of the Avon and the "Globe." Professor Raleigh keeps in great part to the plays themselves for revelation of Shakespeare's character; and although he recognises that the sonnets are a genuine expression of the poet's feeling during a time of crisis, he does not seem to attach to them so much importance as the majority of Shakespearean students of the more ambitious order have done. He recognises, in regard to all that is best worth knowing of Shakespeare's mind and opinions, that the play is the thing; and makes some striking suggestions as to the poet's personality, his prejudices, tastes, reading, and knowledge.

Professor Raleigh, as is proper in a book of this character, has naturally kept to what is generally accepted about the poet's career and individuality, without discovering some new "fact" which further research might prove only to be some poor kind of fairy-tale. Think of the rubbish which has been tacked on to so-called criticisms of Shakespeare! At the same time, his "superstition," as he calls it, is tempered with sober judgment. He reminds us—what was pointed out in an article in the *Quarterly Review* some twenty years ago—of the surprising fact that Shakespeare was curiously ignorant of details of natural history, and was, indeed, as his writings plainly show, more of a town-man than a country-man. But criticisms of detail may well be left alone, in this place at all events. Shakespeare the writer, according to the over-strict grammarian, and those other persons who make a fetich of precious exactitude, made several small errors. But the greatness of the plays, every one of which, be it written early or late, is full of the evidence of genius, makes such trivial criticism—vigorously enough condemned by Professor Raleigh—unworthy of notice. It is, indeed, the works which matter, and all attempts made elsewhere to photograph the individuality of the man are practically of no importance.

Shakespeare's history was a triumph of painstaking effort. He left Stratford a young man, to take his part in the game of life in Elizabethan London. For years he worked as playwright and actor, until he had managed to secure a small fortune; then he retired to his home in Stratford, to play the part of a simple country gentleman. There was absolute freedom from what is known as self-advertisement in all this. He seemed to be quite content to go through his work for the work's sake, and, we may with safety feel assured, had no idea that he was destined to be numbered amongst the glorious company of our English immortals. But there he is, first and foremost; and men of all the nations are found admiring, studying, gaining inspiration from his plays.